THE

ROMANS UNDER THE EMPIRE.

VOL. VIII.

LONDON

PRINTED BY SPOTTISWOODE AND CO.

NEW-STREET SQUARE

HISTORY

OF THE

ROMANS UNDER THE EMPIRE.

BY

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CHAPLAIN TO THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

NEW EDITION.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOL. VIII.

LONDON:

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1865.

CONTENTS

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THE EIGHTH VOLUME.



CHAPTER LXIII.

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CHAPTER LXIII.

Accession of Nerva.—Reaction against the tyranny of Domitian moderated by the clemency of Nerva.—The Prætorians demand the punishment of Domitian's assassins.—Association of Trajan in the empire.—Death of Nerva, A. D. 98, A. U. 851.—Origin and early career of Trajan.—His position and operations on the Rhenish frontier.—Roman fortifications between the Rhine and Danube.—Trajan's moderation and popularity in Rome.—Pliny's panegyric.—Expedition against the Dacians, A. D. 101.—Trajan crosses the Danube.—His successes and triumph, A. D. 103.—Second expedition, A.D. 104.—Bridge over the Danube.—Conquest and annexation of Dacia.—The Ulpian forum and Trajan's column at Rome.—Conquests in Arabia.—Trajan's architectural works in the city and the provinces.—Vigilance, splendour, and economy of his administration.—His personal qualities, countenance, and figure. (A. D. 96–115. A. U. 849–868.)

Cocceius Nerva elected emperor by the senate. A. D. 96. A. U. 849.

DOMITIAN had fallen in the recesses of his palace by the hands of his own private attendants; but no sooner was the blow struck than it appeared how wide the conspiracy had reached, how far the conspirators' plans and precautions had extended. The chiefs of the senate had evidently consulted together, and ascertained among themselves the man on whom their own suffrages could be united, and who would be at the same time acceptable to the military power encamped at their gates. They had fixed on M. Cocceius Nerva, a man well-versed in affairs, an accomplished speaker and writer, and whose family took rank

among the official nobility.[1] Though he had attained the chief magistracy, he had not hitherto been eminent in public life, nor could he pretend to superior genius or striking fitness for command; his birth was not such as could cast a shade on the representatives of the ancient houses; his character was not of the severe and antique cast which would rebuke the laxity of his voluptuous courtiers; self-indulgent if not vicious himself, he might be expected to tolerate the weaknesses of others, while his age and infirmities would expose him to study his own ease by yielding to the influences around him.[2] The senators hoped to guide him, the soldiers could hardly fear him; but his personal appearance was agreeable and imposing, and in the charm which soonest wins and retains longest the admiration of the populace, he might hope to rival Augustus and Tiberius, Nero and Titus.

His character and pretensions.

Such was the ideal of a prince conceived at this epoch by the Roman nobles.[3] The moment was an important turning-point in the career of the empire. It is by a mere accident indeed that the series of imperial biographies compiled by Suetonius closes with Domitian, and that the name of the Cæsars is commonly given, by way of eminence, to the first twelve only of the Roman emperors. The title of Cæsar continued, I need hardly repeat, to be applied to the chief of the state from age to age, while the actual blood of the

[1] Martial addressing him when a private citizen speaks favourably of his literary accomplishments (viii. 70., ix. 27.), and says that Nero stood in awe of his poetical genius. He was twice consul, in 71 and 90. Eutropius adds that he was "nobilitatis mediæ."

[2] Dion, lxviii. 1.; Victor, *Cæs.* 13., charges him with excess in wine.

[3] No doubt it might be said of Nerva, as was said before of Piso the chief of the conspiracy against Nero: "Sed procul gravitas morum . . . . idque pluribus probabatur, qui in tanta vitiorum dulcedine summum imperium non restrictum nec perseverum volunt." Tac. *Ann.* xv. 48. Comp. also Tac. *Hist.* ii. 37.

first of the number was exhausted, as we have seen, in Nero, the sixth in succession. Nevertheless, the death of Domitian and the accession of Nerva form a marked epoch in our history, on which we shall do well to pause. The empire now enters on a new phase of its existence. Hitherto the idea that the primacy was due to the most excellent man in the commonwealth, which easily led to the notion of the emperor's divine character and origin, had, except in the transient usurpations of Otho and Vitellius, been faithfully preserved. But the election of Nerva was avowedly a mere matter of political convenience. The senate at last was master of the situation, and it rejected pointedly the flimsy notions with which the nation had so long suffered itself to be amused. Cocceius Nerva was the son of an official, the grandson of a jurist, the great grandson of the minister of Augustus. His ancestors and all their affinities, for several generations, were well-known to the senators, and they were very sure that no drop of celestial ichor had ever flowed in the veins of any one of them. Though the family had been settled in Italy for a hundred years, it was known to have come over from Crete, where long before it had been planted by an Italian progenitor.[1] For the first time the emperor of the Romans was neither a Julius nor a Claudius, nor a Domitius, nor even a Flavius, all ancient names of Latium or Sabellia; he was not the son of a god, nor the remotest descendant of one; he

[1] Victor, *Cæs.* 12.: "Quid enim Nerva Cretensi prudentius." In the *Epitome* he is styled "Narniensis," and this word some of the commentators would restore in the passage above cited. There is, indeed, no other authority for the presumed foreign origin of Nerva; but both in the *Cæsars* and the *Epitome*, Victor remarks particularly that hitherto all the emperors were either Roman by origin or at least Italian, as Otho and Vespasian: "Hactenus Romæ, seu per Italiam orti imperium rexere: hinc advenæ." The foreign extraction of Nerva's successors generally is well ascertained. I have little doubt, therefore, that "Cretensis" is Victor's word.

was not even in popular acceptance a Roman or an Italian, but a provincial by origin. The pedants of a later age, and probably the pedants of that age itself, remarked apologetically that the first of the Tarquins, the best and wisest of the Roman kings, had been not a Roman but an Etruscan; and they added truly that Rome had flourished by the foreign virtues she had grafted upon the parent stock.[1] But it was felt on all hands that a great revolution had practically been accomplished. The transition from Domitian to Nerva may be compared to the descent in our own history from James to William, from the principle of divine right to the principle of compact and convention.

Doubtful attitude of the legions.

The private career of Nerva had been that of his class generally. His disposition was naturally good, his understanding excellent and well-cultivated, his morals pliant; his ambition, if such he had, had been kept under strict control, and, satisfied with the dignities to which he could safely aspire, he had refrained from exciting his master's jealousy. He had thus reached in safety and good repute the ripe age of sixty-five, or, according to some accounts, seventy years. But Nerva was older in constitution than in years; the luxury in which he had indulged may have impaired his vital forces, and he now suffered perhaps for his imprudence by excessive weakness of digestion. In choosing him for their prince, the nobles, too timid themselves to dispute the throne with Domitian, may have looked to another proximate vacancy, when the succession might be environed with fewer perils. The

[1] Victor, *Cæs.* 1. (comp. *Epit.* 11.): "Plane compertum urbem Romam externorum virtute atque insitivis artibus præcipue crevisse." Martial has two brilliant panegyrics on Nerva: xi. 5., xii. 6. He compares him to Numa, bespeaks for him the reverence of the old Roman heroes, and declares finally that now at last,

"Si Cato reddatur, Cæsarianus erit."

Prætorians seem to have felt no regard for the Flavian dynasty, which had never condescended to humour them. The legions on the Danube, to whom Domitian was personally known, and whose officers were of his direct appointment, murmured, and threatened to mutiny at his fall[1]; but the army of the Rhine was controlled by a brave and faithful commander, whose influence extended perhaps even further than his authority; a commander whose merits should have gained him the election of the senate without a competitor, had transcendent merit been the object of its search. It remained for Nerva to offer soon afterwards a share in the supreme power to the man to whose loyal support he owed no doubt his own tranquil succession. We shall soon arrive at the association of Trajan in the empire. We must first notice the circumstances of alarm and perplexity which compelled the new ruler, whom the senate and army had just chosen with acclamations, to strengthen his weak hands by resorting to this magnanimous assistant.

Indignities heaped on the memory of Domitian.

Domitian's body lay unheeded on his chamber floor, till it was removed by the pious care of his nurse Phyllis, and borne on a common bier by hired hands to his suburban villa on the Latin Way. From thence his ashes were privily conveyed to the temple of the Flavian family, and placed beside those of his niece Julia.[2] The people, who witnessed with unconcern the transfer of power to a new dynasty, took no interest in these humble obsequies, which the nobles, though fully resolved that the third of the Flavii should not share in the divine honours of his father and brother, did not care to interrupt. In the curia indeed the

[1] Philostr. *Vit Sophist.* i. 7., where the soldiers are said to have been recalled to their duty by the persuasive eloquence of the sophist Dion Chrysostomus.

[2] Suet. *Domit.* 17.; Dion, lxvii. 18.

tyrant's fall was hailed with tumultuous rejoicings. The fathers broke out in execrations and contumelies against him, placed ladders against the walls, and tore down his images and trophies. The city had been thronged with his statues, which now fell in the general proscription; those of marble were ground to powder, those of gold, silver, and bronze were melted down, and amongst them doubtless the noble colossus in the forum. The name of Domitian was effaced on every monument, and possibly his arch of triumph overthrown, as well as the Janus-arches with which he had decorated the thoroughfares.[1]

Recall of the exiles.

But the effervescence of popular exultation was directed to more important objects. The exiles of the late proscription were recalled with acclamation, and this indulgence embraced the philosophers as well as the political sufferers.[2] There arose a general cry against the instruments of the tyrant's cruelty, and vengeance was demanded on the delators, among whom were senators, prætors, and consulars. Nerva, discreet and mild, would have been content with staying all the suits then in progress, with reversing all sentences in force against Domitian's victims, and compensating, as far as possible, those who had suffered; but the

Prosecution of delators.

[1] Suet. *Domit.* 23.; Plin. *Paneg.* 52.; Dion, lxviii. 1. Gruter gives several inscriptions in which Domitian's name is erased. The Senate refused to enrol their latest tyrant among the national divinities; but they did not carry their resentment to the memory of his predecessors. The Flavian temple in the Forum was allowed to stand, and perpetuate the cult of Vespasian and Titus to a late age. It was burnt and again restored a hundred years afterwards. Possibly the destruction of Domitian's monuments was not so complete as it is represented; at least Procopius declares that he saw a bronze statue of this prince erect in his own day, on the right hand of the ascent to the Capitol from the Forum. Procop. *Hist. Arcan.* 8.

[2] The ecclesiastical tradition that St. John was recalled on this occasion from his exile in Patmos (Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 20.; Oros. vii. 11.) seems to be reflected from the popular recollection of this recall of the philosophers. The proscriptions of Domitian and the rehabilitations of Nerva refer simply to Rome or Italy.

time-servers who had crouched most ignobly under the late tyranny were now the loudest in invoking punishment on its ministers, and attacked their foes with a violence not inferior to that which they had themselves endured.[1] Those who had no personal wrongs to avenge resented the ill-treatment of friends and connexions. Pliny, who had risen high under Domitian, seized the occasion to distinguish himself. His vanity does not allow us to give him credit for disinterestedness. It was a fine opportunity, so he himself proclaims, for attacking the guilty, for avenging the innocent, for *advancing oneself*.[2] Of all the enormities of the tyrant's creatures, none, he says, had been greater than that of Certus, who had actually laid hands in the curia on the noble Helvidius. With Helvidius Pliny was connected in friendship, and they had common friends in the Fannias and Arrias, the noble consorts of the Pætuses and Thraseas. Pliny assails Certus in the senate; the culprit dares not appear; his friends in vain excuse or intercede for him in the face of the indignant fathers. Nerva refrains indeed from moving the assembly to institute a process against him, but refuses him the consulship, and even supersedes him in the prætorship. Certus dies within a few days; of mortification, it may be hoped; for thus much at least is popularly known, that the image of Pliny, sword in hand, ever floated from that moment before him in his disturbed imagination.[3] The moderation which Nerva prescribed to himself in regard to this great criminal seems to have marked his dealings with all the class, and the victims of

Pliny's attack on Certus.

Clemency of Nerva.

[1] Plin. *Ep.* ix. 13.: "Ac primis quidem diebus *redditæ libertatis* pro se quisque inimicos suos incondito turbidoque more postulaverant, simul et oppresserant."

[2] Plin. *l. c.*: "Materiam insectandi nocentes, miseros vindicandi, *se proferendi*."

[3] Plin. *l. c.* He continues: "Verane hæc, adfirmare non ausim; interest tamen exempli ut vera videantur."

the delators were probably little satisfied with the amount of favour they experienced from him. They had yet to wait for a prince of firmer hand or harsher character for the full revenge, which was not long in arriving. Much, however, as the nobles feared the treachery and falsehood of accusers among their own order, they lived in more constant dread of the denunciations of their retainers. It was hailed as a great safeguard of their lives and honour, when Nerva once more forbade the admission of a slave's testimony against his master, or even of a freedman against his patron.[1] The edict of Titus against false accusations was revived with additional penalties. One more pledge was necessary to restore the entire confidence of the fathers. Nerva came forward of his own accord, and vowed that no member of the order should suffer death under his administration. Then, and not till then, could Fronto, a distinguished senator, interpose to arrest the torrent of prosecution, and demand a general amnesty. *It is ill*, he said, *to have a prince under whom no one may do anything; but worse to have one who lets every one do as he will.*[2]

Nerva's moderation mingled with timidity.

Such free speaking in the august presence was as rare as the clemency to which it pointed, and the historian who relates it immediately subjoins the remark, that Nerva was weak in health and constitution, leaving us to infer that there was some want of intellectual and moral vigour also in a prince who could listen so complacently and act so gently. Such indeed was Nerva's timidity, that on a report of Domitian being yet alive, he is said to have been quite unmanned, and only sustained

[1] It is especially mentioned that Nerva forbade slaves to accuse their masters of "Jewish manners." Dion, lxviii. 1.

[2] Dion, *l. c.* Reimar believes him to have been C. Julius Fronto, and consul in 99: Clinton styles him Cornelius, and places his consulship in 100.

through the crisis by the resolution of his immediate attendants.[1] However this may be, Nerva continued to act throughout his brief career with a consistent moderation, which was founded, we may hope, on principle. He forbade statues to be made of himself in the precious metals. He restored, as far as possible, to their proper owners, the estates and fortunes which Domitian had confiscated. He divided portions of land among needy citizens in the spirit of the republican legislation, and was the first to devise a scheme, which received ample development under his successors, for relieving the poor by a state provision for their children.[2] To meet these extraordinary expenses he sold great masses of imperial property, the accumulated furniture of his palaces, vestments, jewels and pleasure-houses, distributing at the same time liberal presents among his friends. The more sober portion of the citizens were not displeased at his retrenching the expenditure in games and spectacles, and forbidding so much blood to be shed in the amphitheatre, while he gratified the populace by allowing the return of the mimes.[3] He owed it perhaps to the briefness of his tenure of power that he was enabled, like Titus before him, to keep his vow not to cause the death of a senator, and the favour in which he was held by the nobles shines forth in the famous panegyric of their spokesman Tacitus, that he reconciled the two conflicting political principles, the authority of the prince and the freedom of the people.[4] The Romans indeed took

[1] Victor, *Epit.* 12.

[2] Dion, lxviii. 2. Nerva founded or restored colonies at Scylacium and Verulæ in Italy, and Sitifa in Mauretania. Zumpt, *Comm. Epigr.* i. 399. Victor, *Epit.* 12.: "Puellas puerosque natos parentibus egentibus sumptu publico per Italiæ oppida ali jussit."

[3] Nerva forbade the single combats of the gladiators. Zonar. xi. 20.

[4] Tac. *Agric.* 3.: "Res olim dissociabiles miscuerit, principatum et libertatem."

pleasure in comparing him with the virtuous son of Vespasian, and the story told of Titus that he put swords in the hands of suspected conspirators, to show his just confidence in his own merit, was now repeated, whether truly or not, of Nerva.[1] Nor was it forgotten, however, that this good ruler took care to confirm the best measures even of the monster Domitian, and particularly the edict against mutilation.[2] On reviewing his career, Nerva could boast with justice that he had committed no act which should prevent him from abdicating, if he thought fit, in perfect security. Nevertheless, he did not escape, even during his lifetime, some harsh reflections on a clemency so ill-appreciated. One evening Mauricus, just returned from banishment, was supping with him. Among the guests was Veiento, mentioned above among the vilest of Domitian's creatures, who had made himself bitter enemies by his zeal in denouncing and prosecuting the noblest Romans. The conversation fell on the subject of Catullus, then lately deceased, whose pandering to the jealous humours of Domitian has been already mentioned. *Were Catullus now alive*, said Nerva, *what would his fate be? He would be supping with us*, rejoined the free-spoken Mauricus, with a glance at the odious delator.[3]

On the whole the senators were well-satisfied with the prince they had set up, and they allowed his merits to be blazoned forth without a breath of detraction. The name of Nerva has

Conspiracy of Calpurnius defeated.

[1] Dion, lxviii. 2.

[2] Dion, *l. c.* Nerva is said to have forbidden the marriage of uncles with their brothers' daughters, a licentious innovation which Domitian, as we have seen, had discountenanced. All the tyrant's legislation would probably have been swept away had not his best enactments or views been sustained by his successor.

[3] Plin. *Ep.* iv. 22. For the cause of Domitian's animosity to Junius Mauricus, see Tac. *Hist.* iv 40., and for his banishment *Agric.* 45. He was the brother of Arulenus Rusticus, and suffered in the proscription of the year 93.

been associated in after ages with the mildness of age, and the charm of paternal government.[1] Nevertheless he did not escape the penalty of his station. Plots were formed against him, to which even his good qualities, connected, as they might seem to be, with some weakness of character, may have partly conduced. An attempt was made to overthrow him by a certain Calpurnius Crassus, who boasted his descent from the family of the triumvir, and whose haughty temper, though controlled by the firmer hand of preceding despots, could not brook the supremacy of one of his own class, no more, as he himself professed, than the first of the senators. This conspiracy, however, was easily suppressed. The nobles of the city, even had they generally wished it, had long lost the art of conspiring. It would seem that only freedmen and soldiers could now overthrow an emperor. Nerva, faithful to his promise, declined to take the life of his enemy, and merely banished him to the pleasant retreat of Tarentum.[2] But a greater danger beset the prince of the senators from another quarter. When the nobles were satisfied, the soldiers were generally discontented. Casperius Ælianus, prefect of the Prætorians under the last emperor, whom Nerva had allowed to retain his important post, excited the guards of the palace against his too generous master, and encouraged them to demand the blood of Domitian's assassins. No inquiry, it seems, had been made into the act which had freed the Romans from their odious yoke; the perpetrators of the deed had not been punished, but neither had they been rewarded. It was enough that the deed was done, a deed of bad example for princes, yet such as both the prince and the people might fairly turn to their own advantage. Perhaps, had the assassins been citizens,

Mutiny of the Prætorians, who demand the punishment of Domitian's assassins.

[1] Auson. *Cæs.* 13.: "Nerva senex, princeps nomine, mente parens."
[2] Dion, lxviii. 3.; Victor, *l. c.*

they would have been hailed with public demonstrations of gratitude, like the tyrannicides of earlier days; but the act of slaves or freedmen was decorously passed over in silence. Nerva, however, opposed himself to this threatened violence with a noble courage. He bared his neck to the Prætorians, whose fury he had no means of resisting, and offered himself as a sacrifice in place of their victims. But Casperius was master, at least for a moment, and directed the slaughter, without form of trial, of Parthenius, and such of his associates as could be arrested.[1] When the deed was done, nothing remained for the emperor but to make such excuse for it in public as the circumstances admitted. It might be represented as the hasty explosion of mistaken zeal, of extravagant loyalty, of blind devotion to the military sacrament. To the new emperor and to his well-wishers, the senate and people of Rome, it was a pledge that a life dear to the interests of peace and freedom should be well protected or signally avenged. But whatever he might say in public, Nerva felt in his heart the disgrace of being thus controlled, an imperator by his soldiers, and resolved, if he could not punish this outbreak, at least never to subject himself to such another. He addressed a letter to Ulpius Trajanus, then commanding on the Rhine, offering him a share in the empire, and invoking him, according to the story, with a verse of Homer, to exact retribution from the Greeks for the tears they had drawn from his sovereign.[2] Without awaiting a reply, Nerva ascended the Capitol, and convening the citizens before the

Nerva adopts Trajanus, and associates him in the empire.

[1] Dion, *l. c.*; Victor, *Epit.* 24.: "Sed neglecto principe requisitos jugulavere." Plin. *Paneg.* 6.: "Magnum illud sæculo dedecus: magnum reipublicæ vulnus impressum est. Imperator et parens generis humani obsessus, captus, inclusus: ablata mitissimo seni servandorum hominum potestas." It must be remembered that Pliny uses all the emperors as foils to his own patron Trajan.

[2] Dion, *l. c.*: τίσειαν Δαναοὶ ἐμὰ δάκρυα σοῖσι βέλεσσι.

temple of Jupiter, proclaimed his new colleague as his own adopted son, with the words, *I hereby adopt M. Ulpius Nerva Trajanus: may the gods bless therein the senate, the people, and myself.* This act he again ratified with legal solemnities in the curia,[1] the nobles admitting without demur the exercise by the emperor of the rights common to every father of a Roman family, though in this case it implied no less than a pledge of the imperial succession. Their habitual deference to legal principles could not have blinded them to the political disability they thus practically imposed upon themselves. Henceforth, the power of adoption, with all its legitimate consequences, was regularly claimed by the reigning emperor, and after-ages acknowledged the wisdom with which for generations it was exercised.[2] The aged emperor was thus confirmed on his throne. The turbulent guards of the city trembled before the legions of a resolute chief, and shrank back into their camp. Nerva had mated his assailants: but his own game was now nearly played out, and he enjoyed but a short breathing space of ease and security before his death, which happened on the 23rd of January, 98, after a reign of sixteen months and a few days only.

Death of Nerva, A. D. 98. A. U. 851.

The little our records have transmitted to us of the life and qualities of Nerva can be but inadequately supplied by the testimony of busts and medals to his personal appearance; nevertheless none of the emperors is more vividly characterized in the effigies which remain of him. The representations of Nerva in marble are

Personal appearance of Nerva.

[1] Dion, *l. c.* The adoption took place in October 97.
[2] Claudian, xxviii. 417.

> "Hic illi mansere viri, quos mutua virtus
> Legit, et in nomen Romanis rebus adoptans
> Judicio pulcram seriem, non sanguine duxit.
> Hic proles atavum deducens Ælia Nervam,
> Tranquillique Pii, bellatoresque Severi."

numerous, and rank among the most interesting monuments we possess of this description. Among the treasures of antiquity preserved in modern Rome none surpasses, none perhaps equals, in force and dignity, the sitting statue of this emperor, which draws all eyes in the Rotunda of the Vatican, embodying the highest ideal of the Roman magnate, the finished warrior, statesman, and gentleman of an age of varied training and wide practical experience.[1] Such a figure an Englishman might claim with pride as the effigy of a governor-general of half a continent. Unfortunately, we are too little acquainted with the original to pronounce on its agreement with his actual character; and we could wish that it had come to us as the portrait of an Agricola,—of one whose magnanimity we accept on trust from the panegyric of Tacitus. We do not hear, indeed, of Nerva, that he ever commanded in the provinces, or led an army against the foes of the empire; nor, in sooth, can he be absolved from the charge of vices, common to the idle and luxurious of his rank and class, which in better and healthier times would argue great moral degradation; yet, if we really contemplate his likeness in the noble figure in the Vatican, we may fairly say of the prince as the historian affirms of the general: *You might easily deem him good; you would willingly believe him great.*[2]

Your filial love, most venerable imperator, made you wish your succession to be long retarded; but the gods were eager to advance your virtues to the

[1] The antiquity of this remarkable statue is acknowledged. It is asserted, however, that the upper and lower halves, the one naked, the other draped, did not originally belong to the same figure. Meyer on Winckelmann, *Gesch. der Kunst*, 6. xi. c. 3.

[2] Tac. *Agric.* 44.: "Quod si habitum quoque ejus posteri noscere velint, decentior quam sublimior fuit; nihil metus in vultu, gratia oris supererat; bonum virum facile crederes, magnum libenter." Comp. Julian. *Cæsar.*· *παρῆλθεν ἐπὶ τούτοις γέρων ὀφθῆναι καλὸς—λάμπει γὰρ ἔστιν ὅτε καὶ ἐν τῷ γήρᾳ τὸ κάλλος—ἐντυχεῖν πρᾳότατος, χρηματίσαι δικαιότατος.*

helm of state, which you had promised to direct. This being so, I invoke all happiness on yourself and on mankind, as befits the age which is illustrated by your name. For my own sake, and for the people's sake, I pray for your health both in mind and body.[1]—Such is the form of congratulation with which Pliny hails the consummation of his friend's greatness, when the lately-adopted son and associate of the deceased Nerva was acknowledged by the senate and people as his legitimate successor. Nerva's career had been too brief to forfeit the hopes entertained of his clemency and discretion, but it allowed him to perform the one act by which he is distinguished among the Cæsars, the act by which he earned the blessings of his people, and secured the approbation of a late posterity. The choice he made of Trajan for his associate and heir was full, even at the time, of happy augury; and when he was suddenly removed but a few months later, the Romans were satisfied with the prospect he bequeathed them, and transferred their vows of allegiance, without a murmur or a misgiving, to one whom they fully believed to be the best and bravest of his countrymen. This loyal acceptance of the legitimate consequences of their own act was creditable to the sense and feeling of the Roman nobles; for it cannot be doubted that, had Nerva made himself an object of detestation, they would have repudiated his adoption as easily as any other of the legal acts of his principate. They proceeded to mark their respect and gratitude even more strongly, by reviving in his favour the right of deification which they had refused to Domitian. To such a distinction Nerva, in theory only the first of

Nerva's merit in adopting Trajan.

[1] Plin. *Ep.* x. 1. This is the first of a series of letters which embraces the correspondence between Pliny and Trajan, and gives us a curious insight into the manners of the times, and the relation of the prince to his people.

the citizens, could have no such pretensions as a Julius, or even a Flavius. But the inconsequence of the proceeding might easily be overlooked, especially if Trajan, as we may suppose, himself solicited it. The act itself had now doubtless lost some portion of its earlier significance, and henceforth the claims of deceased princes to divinity were regarded as purely political.

Origin of the emperor Trajan, and career of his father.

M. Ulpius Trajanus, whose conduct in the purple has placed him in the foremost rank among the heroes of history, is little known to us before his elevation, and we may not at first sight perceive the grounds of the favour in which he was already held by his contemporaries.[1] The Ulpian Gens, to which he was attached, though reputed ancient, was obscure, nor had it contributed a single name to the Fasti. But the Traïan Gens, from which some ancestor of the emperor had passed by adoption into the Ulpian, was, perhaps, still less known; and even after the greatness and virtues of Trajan had drawn attention to it, historians and biographers could say no more of his family than that it was probably transplanted from Italy to Spain, when Scipio Africanus founded a colony at Italica on the Bætis. The Trajani were men of some note in the province, which gave birth to many personages

[1] Eutropius, viii. 2., alone gives him the additional name of Crinitus: perhaps a by-name of his family from the Turdetanian fashion of wearing their hair long. The name is not recognised on the monuments. We have no complete biography of Trajan. Notices of his birth and early career are found in Eutropius and Aurelius Victor, *Cæs.* 13., *Epit.* 13. Dion compressed the reigns of Nerva and Trajan into a single book, of which we possess an imperfect and confused epitome. Pliny, in his *Letters* and *Panegyric*, is our most valuable authority. These and other materials had long since been put together by Tillemont in the *History of the Emperors*; which was generally acknowledged as the best compilation that could be made. But recently the elaborate work of Francke, *Geschichte Trajans*, has supplied many deficiencies in Tillemont, and the chronology of the latter years of this reign has been put on a more satisfactory footing.

distinguished afterwards at Rome. Trajanus, the father of the emperor, and Silius Italicus, the consul and poet, were natives of the same colony, and nearly contemporary in age; but their career was different, for while Silius, a man of fortune and literary acquirements, enjoyed fame and fashion in the capital, his fellow-citizen devoted himself to a career of arms, won victories over the Parthians and the Jews, gained the triumphal ornaments, and governed provinces. Trajanus had commanded the Tenth legion at the bloody storming of Joppa[1]; he had proved himself an adroit courtier as well as a gallant officer; and having advanced in due time to the consulship, reached the summit of official distinction as proconsul of Asia. After this we hear no more of him; but there seems reason to believe that he survived his son's elevation to power, and received from him after death the honours of apotheosis.[2]

Early career of the emperor Trajan.

Trajan, the son, was born, according to the most probable statement, towards the end of the year 53, and, accordingly, on his accession to the undivided sovereignty, had reached the middle of his forty-fifth year.[3] From early youth he had been trained in the camp by his father's side, and had gained the love and confidence of the legions, among which he had waged the border warfare of the empire. He seems to have risen through the various grades of the service, and had held the

[1] Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* iii. 11.

[2] Pliny in his *Panegyricus* (A. D. 100) speaks of Trajan the father as then dead, but not yet deified; the interval, we may suppose, would not be long. That he was actually "consecrated" appears from a medal inscribed: "Divi Nerva et Trajanus pater."

[3] The statements of Eutropius, Victor, and Eusebius vary by one or more years. Dion, who specifies the length of his reign and day of his death makes him 41 at his accession. But as Pliny assures us that he served in his father's Parthian campaign, which can hardly be placed later than 67, he must have been then at least 14 years of age, and, therefore, the latest date we can assign to his birth would be 53; that is, 44 years before his adoption.

post of military tribune for ten years, in which he had become familiar with all the methods and resources of Roman warfare, and had learned the names of officers and soldiers in many distant garrisons, whose bravery and whose wounds he had personally witnessed.[1] He had shown talents for administration, as well as for war, and to his personal merits alone must he have owed his periodical recall from the camp to occupy the chief places in the civil government. It may be presumed that an officer who was deemed qualified to become prætor and consul, had enjoyed the ordinary advantages of training in rhetoric and literature; but Trajan's attainments in learning were slender, and modesty or discretion led him to conceal deficiencies rather than affect accomplishments he did not possess.[2] His elevation to the consulship, which occurred in 91, may have seemed even beyond his deserts, and hence the story which obtained currency, at least at a later period, that it was attended with omens portending his own accession to the purple, and at the same time the sudden downfall of his colleague Glabrio.[3] When his term of office expired, Trajan succeeded to a government in Spain, which he afterwards exchanged for a command in the Lower Germany. The tribes beyond the Rhine had been exasperated rather than repressed by the idle campaigns of Domitian, and required for their control a firm hand and an experienced eye. Trajan, while faithful to his imperator,

[1] Plin. *Paneg.* 15.

[2] Victor, *Epit.* 13.: "Quum ipse parcæ esset scientiæ, moderateque eloquens." Dion, lxviii. 7.: *παιδείας μὲν γὰρ ἀκριβοῦς, ὅση ἐν λόγοις, οὐ μετεῖχε.* Comp. Julian, *Cæsar.* of Trajan : *ὁ δὲ καίπερ δυνάμενος λέγειν ὑπὸ ῥᾳθυμίας. . . . φθεγγόμενος μᾶλλον ἢ λέγων.* An epigram in the Anthologia is ascribed to Trajan, and he composed commentaries on his Wars in Dacia See Reimar on Dion, *l. c.* The story that he was instructed by Plutarch may be rejected as a fiction, founded, perhaps, on the favour he undoubtedly showed to that philosopher.

[3] Suet. *Domit.* 12.

had a discreet regard to his own interests also. He plunged into no aggressive warfare, but was satisfied with the fame of vigilance and prudence for preserving peace on the frontiers.[1] By such self-restraint he escaped, perhaps, the mortification of an Agricola, retained his post throughout the latter years of his jealous master, and reaped the fruits of his temperate reserve, when the prince of the senate required the protection of his best officer against his own mutinous guards.

His discreet moderation as commander on the Rhine.

When, indeed, Nerva was reduced to seek this protection, his choice would necessarily lie between the commanders of the two great European divisions of the Roman forces, the prefect of the Rhenish, and the prefect of the Danubian legions; for the chief of the army of Syria lay at too great a distance to compete, at least at the moment, with either of these formidable champions. But of the military triumvirate in whose hands the fate of Rome now actually resided, the commander on the Rhine had generally the most decisive influence; and it was fortunate for the feeble emperor that he possessed at this juncture in his lieutenant Trajan the most devoted as well as the bravest of partisans. The adoption of such a colleague silenced disaffection; the few remaining months of Nerva's reign were passed in tranquillity and honour; and even the prætorians acquiesced without a murmur in the accession of the valiant captain on the Rhine.

Accession of Trajan to the empire.

The messengers of the senate, charged with the vows of all the citizens, found Trajan among his soldiers at Cologne, and there announced to him his succession.[2] He had already been nominated to his second consulship; he now assumed all the great functions of state which together

Trajan gives pledges for moderation.

[1] Plin. *Paneg.* 14.

[2] Victor. *Epit.* 13.: "Hic imperium apud Agrippinam nobilem Galliæ coloniam accepit."

constituted the imperial power. He replied with a letter to the senate, in which he promised, after his father's example, that no magnate of their order should suffer capitally during his reign; and this formal announcement was accepted as a pledge of constitutional government. Nor was it an empty compliment. It implied a promise to conduct affairs in a spirit of moderation; not to pamper the soldiers or the people; not to scatter the public treasures in needless debauchery; not to create a dire necessity for rapine, which must mark for plunder and slaughter the wealthiest and noblest of the citizens. So perfect was the content of all classes, so easily did the wheels of administration move in the capital, that the new emperor was not required even to hasten to Rome, and assume the reins in person. He had conceived a system of government different from that of any of his predecessors. Though not wanting in ability for the direction of civil affairs, his experience and his tastes were chiefly military. Long accustomed to the life of the camps, he had been debarred by his master's jealousy from the full exercise of his genius for war; but he had laboured in restoring the discipline of the legions, and had attached them personally to him, even while forced to restrain their ardour for more active employment. He flattered himself that he had prepared a career of victory by the perfection to which he had brought the instrument which was to accomplish it. Trajan completed the fortification of the Rhenish frontier by the establishment of colonies and military posts. Nigh to the ruined leaguer of Castra Vetera he planted the station which bore for centuries the name of Ulpia Trajana. He threw a bridge across the Rhine at Mainz, and settled a colony ten miles beyond the river, possibly at Höchst, and another further south, at the medicinal springs of Baden Baden.[1] He

Trajan's bridge across the Rhine at Mainz.

[1] The "munimentum Trajani" (Ammian. Marcell. xvii. 1.), about ten miles from Moguntiacum, seems to correspond with the position

repaired and strengthened the lines commenced by Drusus and extended by Tiberius, which ran from a point nearly opposite to Bonn, in an oblique direction, across the Taunus district; and he contemplated carrying a continuous fosse and rampart to the bank of the Danube. The upper waters of the two great rivers of Western Europe approach very near to each other in the Black Forest, where the Danube has its source; but from thence they rapidly diverge to the north and east respectively. The wedge of land between them had, from the time of Cæsar's contest with the Suevi, been abandoned for the most part by the natives to a slender but constant immigration of Romanized Gauls; and these new occupants gladly compounded for the protection or countenance of the empire by a tribute, to which was given the name of tenths.[1] The tract thus held received the title of the Agri Decumates, or Tithe-land; but we have no record of it in history till we hear of the undertaking of Trajan, who is supposed to have commenced at least the long fortified lines by which it was eventually protected throughout.[2] Nor can we determine how far this

The Agri Decumates.

of Höchst. Mannert, *Geogr.* iii. 463. Baden Baden was Aquæ, or Aurelia Aquensis.

[1] Tac. *Germ.* 29.: "Levissimus quisque Gallorum et inopia audax dubiæ possessionis solum occupavere. Mox limite acto promotisque præsidiis, sinus Imperii et pars provinciæ habentur." The *limes* here is not a boundary line, but a road from the centre for the rapid transmission of troops to the frontier.

[2] One section of this fortification (from the Westerwald across the Main to the Altmühl: Niebuhr, *Lect. on Rom. Hist.* ii. 252.) is ascribed, according to some critics, by Frontinus to Domitian: *Stratagem.* i. 3. 10.: "Imperator Cæsar Domitianus Aug. quum Germani more suo e saltibus et obscuris latebris subinde impugnarent nostros, tutumque regressum in profunda sylvarum haberent, limitibus per centum viginti millia passuum actis, non mutavit tantum statum belli, sed subjecit ditioni suæ hostes quorum refugia nudaverat." But this I rather interpret of a road driven into the heart of the country, than of a military rampart. So Frontinus again, i. 5. 10.: "Ab altera parte limitem agere cœpit, tanquam per eum erupturus."

emperor proceeded in the accomplishment of this design, which was prosecuted by his next successor, and completed perhaps, or restored and strengthened, by Probus, a century and a half later. Of this great work,—the greatness of which lay, however, in the extent and vigour of the design rather than in the massiveness of its execution,—sufficient vestiges even now remain to trace it from river to river; but these vestiges consist at most of faint marks of a mound and ditch, which seem to have been strengthened by a palisade, with watchtowers at intervals, but to have been nowhere combined with a wall of masonry.[1] Nor, if Trajan commenced these works, can the date of his share in them be ascertained; as, however, he remained but one year on the Rhenish frontier after his accession, and never returned to it, we may conclude that his stations and colonies, and military lines were planned, at least, and undertaken while he was yet a subject.

Commencement of a rampart from the Rhine to the Danube.

Having thus completed his arrangements in this quarter, Trajan at last bent his steps homeward, and made his entry into the city in the year 99. He had received the Tribunitian power at the time of his adoption; the title also of Germanicus, together with the name of his father Nerva, had been bestowed on him on the same occasion. The consulship, with which he had been a second time invested while the late emperor was still living, he declined to claim for the ensuing year, being himself absent from the city, from respect, perhaps, to the ancient usage; nor would he allow the senate to salute him as father of his country till he had presented himself to the citizens, and earned the endearing appellation by his courtesy and

Trajan enters Rome, A. D. 99.

1. The line of "Trajan's wall" has been carefully examined within the last few years by Mr. Yates, whose interesting account of it I have read, if I am not mistaken, in a recent volume of *Transactions of the Archæological Institute.*

moderation.[1] His demeanour as well as his actions were such as befitted the true patriot and citizen, and excited accordingly the warmest enthusiasm. Throughout his progress from Germany he abstained from the demands and exactions usually made even on subjects and provincials. His entry into Rome was a moral triumph. Martial, in a few graphic touches, brings vividly before us the man, the place, and the people.[2] Pliny exerts himself to describe more elaborately the extreme condescension and affability of the prince, who deigned to approach the home of law and freedom on foot, unattended by guards, distinguished only by the eminence of his stature and the dignity of his bearing; allowing citizens of all grades to throng about him; admitting the greetings of the senators on his return as emperor, with the same graciousness with which he had accepted them when he went forth as a fellow subject; addressing even the knights by name; paying his vows to his country's gods in the Capitol, and entering the palace of the Cæsars as the modest owner of a private mansion.[3] Nor did Trajan stand alone in

[1] Pliny, *Paneg.* 20., declares, with headlong adulation, that every emperor before Trajan had assumed this title without hesitation on the day of his accession. We know, however, that Augustus long deferred it; so did Tiberius (Tac. *Ann.* i. 72.; Suet. *Tib.* 67.) and Vespasian (Suet. *Vesp* 12.). Capitolinus, indeed, asserts that Pertinax, nearly a century later, was the first of the emperors who assumed it at once.

[2] Martial, x. 6.: "Felices quibus urna dedit spectare coruscum
Solibus Arctois sideribusque ducem," &c.

But this is in anticipation of the hero's arrival, for which the poet proceeds to offer his vows in the next epigram: "Nympharum pater amniumque Rhene . . . . Trajanum populis suis et Urbi, Tibris te dominus rogat, remittas."

Compare the verses of Claudian on Stilicho's entry into Rome, xxii. 397. foll. The reader should be warned against the confusion of dates in the arrangement of Martial's pieces. In book x., epigrams 6, 7., and probably 71., refer to Trajan: but xi. 4, 5., though inscribed in the edition to Nerva Trajanus, undoubtedly to Nerva. In book xii. epigram 6. refers to the earlier, and 8. to the later emperor.

[3] Pliny, *Paneg.* 22. foll.: "Qui dies ille quo exspectatus deside-

this exhibition of patriotic decorum. His wife, Plotina, bore herself as the spouse of a simple senator; and as she mounted the stair of the imperial residence, turned towards the multitude, and declared that she was about to enter it with the same equanimity with which she should wish hereafter, if fate so required, to abandon it.[1] Her behaviour throughout her husband's career corresponded with this commencement. Nor less magnanimous was the conduct of Trajan's sister, Marciana, who inhabited the palace in perfect harmony with the empress, and assisted her in maintaining its august etiquette. Trajan himself renewed by word of mouth the oath he had before made in writing, that he would never harm the person of a senator, an oath which he continued faithfully to respect. But he was not unmindful of his parent's adjuration, and sought out for condign punishment the mutineers who had trampled on Nerva's weakness. Such was his confidence in his authority over the soldiers, that he ventured to reduce the customary donative to one-half the amount to which his predecessors had raised it. Not a murmur was heard even in the camp of the prætorians; and when he handed to the prefect the poniard which was the symbol of his office, he could boldly say, *Use this for me, if I do well; if ill, against me.*[2] We have seen that the lenient or feeble Nerva, though he revived the edicts of Titus against the delators, had failed to satisfy the fury of his nobles in punishing them. Trajan had

Magnanimity of Plotina, his wife, and Marciana, his sister.

ratusque urbem ingressus es? . . . . gratum erat cunctis quod senatum osculo exciperes, ut dimissus osculo fueras, &c. . . . quod latus tuum crederes omnibus," &c.

[1] Dion, lxviii. 5.

[2] Dion, lxviii. 16.; Victor, *Cæs.* 13. This famous saying was remembered in the last decline of Rome, and alluded to by Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carm.* 5.:

"Vix habuit mores similes cui, teste Senatu,
In se etiam tractum commiserat Ulpius ensem."

no such weakness, and showed no such moderation. Giving the rein at last to the passions of the sufferers, he executed what, according to Pliny's account, we might call a *razzia* upon the remnant of the culprits. Pliny describes the extraordinary spectacle of a number of these people dragged in chains through the circus before the assembled citizens, with every circumstance of deliberate insult; and when the most obnoxious had been selected for capital punishment, the rest were shipped for exile beyond sea, on the craziest barks in the stormiest weather.[1]

Trajan receives the title of Optimus. A.D. 100. A.U. 853.

The famous *Panegyric*, an impressive monument of this illustrious reign, which seems to have been delivered by Pliny, as consul, on the third anniversary of Trajan's tribunitian power, not only celebrates such instances of his magnanimity and justice, but enumerates also many wise and beneficent measures he had already carried into effect. Our review of these may be deferred till we can comprise the whole course of his civil administration, which was soon interrupted by a long interval of warlike operations. So favourable, however, was the impression Trajan had made during his sojourn in the city, that the senate decreed him, in addition to the other titles usually borne by the emperor, the transcendent appellation of *Optimus*, or the Best.[2] Nor was this a merely

[1] "Congesti sunt in navigia raptim conquisita, ac tempestatibus dediti. Abirent, fugerent vastatas delationibus terras, ac si quem fluctus ac procellæ scopulis reservassent, hic nuda saxa et inhospitale litus incoleret. *Paneg.* 34. Similar severities had been used before by Titus (Suet. *Tit.* 8. see above), but the wrongs sustained had been less, and they had not perhaps been celebrated with such passionate exultation.

[2] Pliny, *Paneg.* 2. 88. It has been remarked, indeed, that the title "Optimus" does not appear on Trajan's coins before his eleventh year, and we must suppose that, though formally assigned him by the senate, he forebore for a time to assume it. Dion (lxviii. 23.) refers this title to a still later date. He adds that Trajan was more proud

formal compliment. While the titles of Cæsar and Augustus, of Magnus and Germanicus, were suffered to descend from sire to son, no other emperor was honoured with the special appellation of *Optimus;* though it is said to have been usual, in later times, for the senate, on the accession of each new chief of the republic, to exclaim, as the highest token of its admiration, that he was more fortunate than Augustus, and better than Trajan.[1]

Trajan marches against the Dacians. A. D. 101. A. U. 854.

But the flattery of the senate, even in the polished phrases of Pliny, the most accomplished of his order, must have been irksome to a man of Trajan's plain sense. We can well believe that he soon began to fret under the restraints of deference to a society by which he must have been frequently mortified, and longed to fling himself into the stir and movement of the military career. Confined for many years within the defences of the camp, he had there assiduously prepared all the machinery of aggressive warfare, and he was now anxious to go and prove it. In the fourth year of his reign he quitted the city to undertake war on a large scale, and with great ends in view, against the long-formidable Dacians.[2] The motives ascribed to him are, indignation at the successes which these barbarians could boast in their previous conflicts with the empire, and disgust at the payment of an annual tribute to which Domitian is said to have consented. But these, perhaps, were mere pretences. Confident

of it than of any other, as a compliment to his character rather than to his exploits.

[1] Eutrop. viii. 5.: "Hujus tantum memoriæ delatum est, ut usque ad nostram ætatem non aliter in Senatu principibus acclamaretur, quam, felicior Augusto, melior Trajano!" One of Trajan's most popular sayings is also recorded by this writer: "Talem se imperatorem esse privatis, quales esse sibi imperatores privatus optasset."

[2] Clinton, *Fast. Rom.* The *Panegyric* of Pliny was delivered in the autumn preceding, when Trajan was designated consul for the fourth time. This consulship he held in 101.

in the perfection of the instrument he now wielded, he trusted by its means to emulate the glories of a Julius or an Alexander. The legions of the Rhine also, however exact their discipline, were doubtless burning for employment; those on the Ister were turbulent as well as impatient. The founder of a new dynasty could hardly depend on their fidelity without humouring their martial instincts. We must consider, too, that the vast and increasing expenses of a military government required to be maintained by extraordinary means, and Trajan may have launched himself against the foe beyond the frontier to obviate the necessity of levying fresh contributions on his own subjects. He meant that his wars should be self-supporting; that their expenses should be defrayed by the conquered enemy, and the cupidity of the soldiers satisfied with the plunder of foreigners. The Dacians, though in name barbarians, seem to have been actually possessors of considerable wealth, and to have attained to a certain degree of social refinement. They were a branch of the Getæ, a people of whom it was remarked that they stood nearest to the Greeks in their natural aptitude for civilization [1]; and besides the stores they accumulated in their repeated inroads on the Greek and Roman settlements, their country abounded in mines of gold and silver, as well as of iron. Such were the glittering spoils which tempted the long-restrained ardour of the legionaries, even more than their fertile plains and illimitable pastures.

The Getæ and the Thracians, of cognate origin,

[1] Justin. xxxii. 3.: "Daci quoque soboles Getarum sunt." Dion, lxvii. 6.: *Δακοὺς δὲ αὐτοὺς προσαγορεύω, ὥσπερ που καὶ αὐτοὶ ἑαυτοὺς καὶ οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι σφᾶς ὀνομάζουσιν· οὐκ ἀγνοῶν ὅτι Ἑλλήνων τινὲς Γέτας αὐτοὺς λέγουσιν, εἴτ' ὀρθῶς εἴτε καὶ μὴ λέγοντες.* The patriotic boasts of Jornandes (*de Reb Get.* i. 5.) leant probably on some foreign authority: "Unde et pæne omnibus barbaris Gothi sapientiores semper exstiterunt, Græcisque pæne consimiles." See Francke, *Gesch. Trajans*, p. 71.; Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom.* i. 452.

occupied the region of Bulgaria and Roumelia, and, according to tradition, the Dacians were an off-shoot from these nations, which crossed the Ister, overran the Banat, Wallachia and Moldavia, and finally fixed its strongholds in the mountainous district of Transylvania. In the second century they may be considered as occupying the broad block of land bounded by the Theiss, the Carpathians, the Lower Danube or Ister, and the Pruth. In the centre of this region rose the great mountainous tract from which the Maros takes its course, and the basin of this river, almost enclosed by a circumvallation of rugged declivities, contained the chief cities of the Dacian people. Here was the residence of their king; here they stored their plunder; hither, when pressed by an invading foe, they retreated, and generally found themselves secure. For the marshes of the lower Theiss and Maros effectually protected them in the west, and the three passes of the Iron Gate, the Vulkan, and the Rothenthurm, were easily defensible against an enemy from the south.[1] Hence they issued in mid-winter, when the deep alluvial soil of the Danubian valley was indurated by frost, and the great river itself congealed, or choked with ice, and crossing the stream at a season when the Romans had desisted from their summer expeditions, and quietly piled their arms, carried fire and sword into the defenceless provinces.[2] On the return of

Geographical position of the Dacians.

Their predatory incursions.

[1] This configuration of the Dacian territory seems to explain the Roman habit of describing the stronghold of the nation as "their mountain." Stat. *Sylv.* iii. 3. 169.: "Quæque suum Dacis donat clementia montem:" i. 1. 80.: "Tu tardum in fœdera montem Longo Marte domas." *Theb.* i. 20.: "Et conjurato dejectos vertice Dacos."

[2] The "conjuratus Ister" of Virgil (*Georg.* ii. 497.) is explained by the Scholiast after a writer named Aufidius Modestus, from the custom of the Dacians to draw water from the Danube, when about to undertake an expedition, and swear by it not to return till they had conquered. Ukert, *Geogr.* iii. 2. p. 608.

fine weather, the Romans armed again, and defied the barbarians, who indeed were unable to stem the current of the Danube: but if they sought to make reprisals, it was a long and difficult task even for Roman engineers to bridge a stream so mighty, and the Dacians had at least ample time to betake themselves to their mountains. The attempts of Domitian's generals to penetrate into the strongholds of Decebalus had been always frustrated, and sometimes with loss and disgrace. To purchase peace by tribute, under whatever name or colour, was a dishonourable and indeed a precarious resource. The time was come when Rome, with a well-appointed army, and under a military ruler, could, by one sustained effort, terminate this state of suspense and suffering. The Roman Peace demanded War in earnest.

The first Dacian campaign. A.D. 101. A.U. 854.

Seven legions may be enumerated, which, together with their auxiliaries, with ten cohorts of prætorians, and a force of Batavian cavalry, took part in the campaigns of Trajan against the Dacians, though we cannot safely affirm that the whole of this mighty armament was employed together in any one of his expeditions.[1] Drawn in part from the stations permanently located on the Mœsian frontier, in part from the military reserves in Illyricum and Dalmatia, in part also from the great army established on the Rhine, a force of sixty or perhaps eighty thousand veterans was mustered on the banks of the Danube and the Save. Segestica, the modern Sissek, was the spot selected by Trajan for the base of his operations. From this place, which had been long the common arsenal of Mœsia and Pannonia, he directed his munitions of war to be floated down

Trajan descends the Save, and throws bridges across the Danube.

[1] Francke (*Gesch. Trajans*, p. 95. foll.) traces all these legions from inscriptions and other records. They were the i. Minervia, the ii. Adjutrix, the iv., v., vii., xi., and xiii.

the Save to its confluence with the greater river.[1] At Singidunum he passed in review the legions of either province, led his united forces to the passage of the Morava, and thence a few miles further to a post named Viminacium, the modern Kastolatz, where the Danube, flowing with a broad but tranquil stream, offered facilities for the construction of a bridge of boats. Here commence the highlands of the Danubian valley, the southernmost spurs of the Carpathians plunging into the river, and confronting the no less rugged abutments of the northern spurs of the Balkan. The stream, confined for thirty miles between these precipitous cliffs, foams in a furious torrent, exasperated by the rocky ledges which at some points intercept its course from one bank to the other. Again the river expands and resumes its tranquil majesty, and near its confluence with a little stream called now the Tjerna, a second bridge seems to have been also thrown across it. From these two points the Danube was henceforth regularly crossed, and the Romans executed roads from both the one and the other, by which to penetrate into Dacia. The more western route led into the Banat by the valley of the Theiss, keeping the mountains to the right; the eastern ascended the Tjerna, having the mountains on the left, till, on a sudden change in their direction, it was required to breast them. Having surmounted the ridge, it descended into the valley of the Temes, and met the former road near Karansebes, at the junction of the Temes and Bistra. These are torrents of little note; but the gorge of the Bistra, through which a way was afterwards carried, led to the pass most properly

The various routes into the highlands of Dacia.

[1] These localities are thus specified from conjecture, founded on the known direction of the lines of road in these parts, and the indications on the Trajan column, which represent the assembling of the army, its magazines and encampments, the crossing of more than one river, and other details of its march. See the interpretation in Francke's *Gesch. Trajans*, p. 192. foll.

designated the Iron Gate, the key of the Maros valley, and of the Dacian mountain-land which surrounds it. Trajan's army crossed the Danube in two divisions at the spots above indicated. He seems himself to have taken the western route[1]; but the two divisions met, as was concerted, and forced the pass together. The resistance of the Dacians, and the obstacles presented by nature, were equally overcome. The Roman armies alighted in the heart of the enemy's country, and established themselves in the royal city of Zermizegethusa.[2]

This place, which became the seat of a Roman colony and acquired the name of Ulpia Trajana, can be clearly identified with the modern village of Varhely, on a little stream called the Strehl, a tributary of the Maros. Trajan had not yet penetrated into the heart of the Dacian stronghold, and the barbarians continued to defend themselves with obstinacy. Their chief, who bore the name of Decebalus, though we cannot affirm that he was the same who twelve years before had proved so formidable to Domitian, met the new invader with not less valour and constancy. A people called the Burri, who are supposed to have dwelt about the sources of the Theiss, sent a message to the imperator, written, it was said, on the surface of a large fungus, requiring him to desist from his attack on their kinsmen; but such interference was contemptuously disregarded. Trajan brought the enemy at last to bay, and in a great battle at a place

Trajan encounters and worsts Decebalus. A.D. 102. A.U. 855.

[1] The stations on this route (the western) are given in the Peutinger Table. and. by a curious chance, a few words of Trajan's own commentaries on this war, preserved by Priscian, suffice to show that he advanced by it. The fragment runs: "inde Berzobim, deinde Aizi, processimus." Comp. *Tab. Peuting.*: "Bersovia xii.; Ahitis iii.; Caput Bubuli ...; Tivisco." Francke, *Gesch. Trajans*, p. 106. with reference to Priscian, lvi.; Putsch, *Auct. Gramm. Lat.* p. 682.

[2] Dion, lxviii. 9. "Zermizegethusa, *i.e.* Zarmi-tzeket-Kusa, mansion couvert de peaux." Bergmann, *Les Gètes*, p. 59.

called Tapæ, the site of which is not determined, routed them with much slaughter.[1] The care he showed for his wounded soldiers endeared him to the legions, which now pushed on with alacrity, and forced their way into the inner circle of hills beyond the Maros, in which the Dacian chief resided. Here Decebalus confessed himself worsted, and sued for peace.

Records of this campaign preserved on the Trajan column at Rome.

Of the above details, slender as they are, little is derived from the direct records of history. The sculptures of Trajan's column, the noblest monument of Roman warfare, have been ingeniously interpreted into a connected narrative of events. The bridges he constructed, the fortresses he attacked, the camps he pitched, the enemies he routed, are here indicated in regular sequence. The Romans are distinguished by their well-known arms and ensigns. The captives they take, the sacrifices they offer, are vividly delineated. The Moorish horsemen, on the one hand, are designated by light-clad warriors riding without reins; the Rhoxolani, on the other, by mounted figures decked in a panoply of mail. Trajan himself harangues, directs, offers his mantle to bind the wounds of his soldiers, takes his seat on the tribunal, or stalks under an arch of triumph. The submission of Decebalus is represented by a troop of envoys bearing the sheepskin cap, which expresses their rank as nobles, and prostrating themselves before the conqueror. The capitulation seems to have been unconditional. The Dacians delivered up their arms, surrendered the fugitives and deserters, razed their

[1] Dion, lxviii. 8. Tapæ is the name of the spot where Julianus defeated the Dacians in the reign of Domitian. The traditions of the country, guided perhaps by the guesses of the antiquarians, point to a place called Crossfeld near Thorda, where a plain is said still to bear the name of Prat-Trajan. This spot seems too far in the interior. The circumstance of the modern appellation is of no real value.

remaining strongholds, and restored the eagle lost under Fuscus.[1] Decebalus consented to form an alliance with the Romans, by which he bound himself to regard their friends and their enemies as his own, and to abstain from enrolling any Roman subject in his armies; for many such, it seems, he had entertained in his service. He yielded possession to the victors of the places they had taken by arms. Finally, he came in person, and paid homage to the emperor. The terms thus exacted in the field were ratified in due form in the senate-house, and Trajan, leaving an army of occupation at Zermizegethusa, and fortifying various posts of importance, quitted the conquered territory and again presented himself to the exulting citizens.[2]

Trajan returns to Rome and triumphs, A.D. 103, A.U. 856.

The victor's return to Rome was solemnized by the reception of Dacian envoys in the senate-house, where they laid down their arms, and joining their hands in the attitude of suppliants, repeated their master's promise of submission, and solicited the favour and protection of the empire. Trajan celebrated a triumph, and received the surname of Dacicus. The rejoicings on this occasion were accompanied by magnificent shows of gladiators, which were congenial to his martial spirit; but we should less have expected the rude warrior to recall the dancers to the theatre; still less that a personal liking for one of these performers should have induced him to this unworthy compliance.[3] But Trajan, with all his valour, generosity,

[1] Dion, lxviii. 9.

[2] Francke, *Gesch. Trajans*, p. 113. foll. The Moorish cavalry are supposed to represent a detachment of auxiliaries accompanying the Roman army, and led by Lusius Quietus, a Mauretanian officer, of whom we shall hear more in the sequel.

[3] The circumstances of this triumph are only known to us in the meagre abridgment of Dion (lxviii. 10.). Statius, the court-poet of an earlier reign, was now dead; Pliny was absent, having just left Rome for the government of Bithynia (A.D. 103. Clinton's *Fast.*

and self-command, was coarse both by nature and habit, and his vicious tastes were not confined to excess in wine.[1] His self-respect was preserved only by the bluntness of his moral sense; and so far it was fortunate for mankind, who profited by the serenity with which he could rise from indulgences which even the Romans regarded as weaknesses, to the firm and prudent exercise of his lofty functions. He plunged again into all the details of the civil administration, and while he devised wise and liberal measures, and watched over their execution, he attended assiduously on the tribunals, and was seen dispensing justice in person, day by day, in the forum of Augustus, in the portico of Livia, and other public places. But these occupations were soon interrupted by the report of fresh aggressions on the part of the Dacians, who began, it seems, as soon as the conqueror's back was turned, to break the treaty in many ways, by collecting arms, receiving deserters, repairing their strongholds, soliciting alliances with neighbouring tribes, and making hostile incursions into the territories of the friends or clients of the empire. They ventured to cross the

Renewed aggressions of the Dacians.

Rom.); and Martial had recently returned to his native Bilbilis. The twelfth book of the *Epigrams* was sent to Rome from Spain. In xii. 8. Martial seems to allude to the foreign captives or envoys who attended the celebration of Trajan's triumph:

"Parthorum proceres, ducesque Serum,
Thraces, Sauromatæ, Getæ, Britanni:"

and in xii. 15. he celebrates the emperor's liberality in surrendering to public objects the splendid furniture of the palace:

"Quicquid Parrhasia nitebat aula,
Donatum est oculis, deisque nostris."

[1] We must be satisfied with Dion's apology, lxviii. 7:. *ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν ἐκ τούτων ἢ αἰσχρὸν ἢ κακὸν ἐδεδράκει ἢ ἐπεπόνθει, ἐπηγορίαν ἂν εἶχε· νῦν δὲ τοῦ τε οἴνου διακόρως ἔπινε καὶ νήφων ἦν, ἔν τε τοῖς παιδικοῖς οὐδένα ἐλύπησε.* Trajan's inebriety is noticed by Spartian in *Hadr.* 3.; Lamprid. in *Alex. Sev.* 39.; Julian. *de Cæsar.*: *οὐκ ἦν ἔξω τοῦ δυνάσθαι ῥητορεύειν, ὑπὸ δὲ τῆς φιλοποσίας ἀμβλύτερος ἑαυτοῦ πολλάκις ἦν.* Victor, *Cæs.* 13.: "Vinolentiam, quo vitio, uti Nerva agebatur, prudentia molliverat, curari vetans jussa post longiores epulas."

Theiss and attack their ancient enemies the Iazyges, on whom Trajan had forbidden them to make reprisals. Again the senate declared them public enemies, and exhorted the emperor to muster all the forces of the state, and reduce them to complete subjection.[1]

Trajan's second expedition against the Dacians.

In the spring of the year 104, Trajan repaired again to his army, cantoned along the course of the Lower Danube, and held ready to be concentrated at his call on any point to which he chose to direct it. An unbroken line of military causeway, stretching from the Mayn across the Odenwald and Black Forest to the Danube, and from thence, closely hugging the right bank of the stream, to the shores of the Euxine, is ascribed to the care and prudence of this imperator, and was doubtless a work of many years' labour.[2] Trajan was the first apparently of the emperors who recognised the homogeneity of the barbarian races before him, foresaw the possibility of their union, and felt the importance of concentrating against them all the resources of the empire. The facilities afforded by these means of communication enabled him to pour the frontier legions on any threatened point, and even to spring on the foe where least prepared to resist him. Of this enormous work some traces may here and there be discovered; but the line is marked at the present day rather by names of posts and colonies founded along it, than by actual remains of turf or stone. At one spot, however, the gorge, namely, of the Danube just below Orsova, popularly known as the Iron Gate, the mark of Trajan's hand may be discovered in a scar which indents for some miles the face of the cliff, forming a terrace about five feet in width. We cannot believe that the way

[1] Dion, lxviii. 10.

[2] Victor, *Cæs.* 13.: "Iter conditum per feras gentes, quo facile ab usque Pontico mari in Galliam permeatur."

was actually so narrow, but additional width may have been gained by a wooden gallery, supported on a projecting framework.[1] The Roman legionary worked well with spade and pickaxe; nor, as may be seen on the Trajan column, was he less familiar with the use of the carpenter's tools; and the forests of central Europe supplied him with abundant materials for the bridges, the palisades, the towers, and the roadways required for military purposes. The road which thus threaded the defile of the Iron Gate was probably completed before the commencement of the second expedition, and the emperor, who had already secured the Banat, and the nearest pass into Transylvania, seems to have now contemplated a wider circuit, and an entrance into the heart of the enemy's country at a more distant point. Besides the Dacian Iron Gate already mentioned, which we must be careful not to confound with the Iron Gate of the Danube, there were two other passes further eastward, those of the Vulkan and the Rothenthurm, leading out of Wallachia. The last and most distant of these defiles is that through which the waters of the Aluta descend into the Danube valley; and an ancient Roman road may be traced to it from the bank of the Danube. With this road the vestiges of an ancient bridge over the great river at Gieli may easily be connected; and at Gieli our antiquaries were wont to fix the spot where Trajan planted in the stream the vast and solid pile described by Dion. But this opinion seems to be refuted by a modern discovery. A little below Orsova the Danube issues from the Iron Gate, and, at

Remains of bridges at Gieli and at Severin.

[1] The construction of this road is described by Mr. Paget in his *Hungary and Transylvania*, ii. 123. It is ascertained to be the work of Trajan from an inscription on the cliff overhanging the road at a place called Ogradina. The inscription slightly supplied by Arnett in a memoir (Vien. 1856), points to the year 101. (Trajan, trib. pot. iv. cons. iv.) while he was Germanicus, but not yet Dacicus: "Montis et fluvii anfractibus superatis viam patefecit."

a village called Severin, where it expands to a width of 1300 yards, the foundations of piers, corresponding in number with the statement of the historian, have been seen when the water was more than usually low. Here, then, as is now generally agreed, stood the bridge of Trajan's architect, Apollodorus.[1] The passage of the river at Severin would point to the Vulkan, at the head of the Schyl, as the pass through which Trajan penetrated into Dacia; but in this direction, it seems there are no vestiges of a Roman causeway, whereas such a road undoubtedly led from Gieli to the Rothenthurm by the line of the Aluta. The question does not appear to me satisfactorily settled; but the correspondence between the account of Dion and the existing indications of a bridge is tolerably close, and it would be perhaps excessive caution to withhold assent from the opinion now commonly received.[2]

Trajan's stone bridge over the Danube.

It seems to have been Trajan's policy to establish a permanent connexion between the opposite banks, so that the Roman forces might command a passage at all seasons without delay or impediment. The foundations he laid were enormous piles of masonry, capable of bearing the greatest weights, and resisting the utmost pressure of ice or water. The superstructure was probably of wood; for though I cannot believe the statement that the span of the arches was 170 Roman, or 163 English feet, the dimensions were undoubtedly such as would hardly admit of solid stonework.[3] The vast

Dimensions of Trajan's bridge.

[1] That the bridge was the work of Apollodorus, of whom more hereafter, is stated by Procopius, *Ædif.* iv. 6.

[2] Francke, p. 128, 129., seems to show that Gieli, about 220 miles below Belgrade, 150 miles below Severin, answers to the conditions required in every respect, except its distance from the presumed base of Trajan's operations. There are remains there, also, of piers and towers, very similar to those at Severin.

[3] Dion's measurements are 150 Roman feet for the height of the arches, 170 for the span, and 4770 for the entire length of the struc-

preparations urged hastily forward, for putting an effectual curb on their aggressions, alarmed the Dacians, and several tribes seem to have repeated their submission. Decebalus sought to avert the attack by another capitulation. But the demands of Trajan were now so severe and peremptory, that the barbarian was driven to despair, and making a last effort for independence, assembed all his vassals, and warned them that the defection of one must draw down ruin upon all, for the Romans were determined to complete their subjugation. The Dacian was brave and resolute; nor need we doubt that he was cunning also, and treacherous. The Romans asserted that he tried to repel the invasion by assassinating their commander. His emissary gained admission to the presence of the fearless and affable imperator, and drew a dagger upon him. Arrested and put to the torture, he divulged the treachery of his master. Decebalus then resorted to another device. He entrapped Longinus, a distinguished Roman officer, and required him to disclose the plans of his imperator. The Roman gallantly refused; and Decebalus had the magnanimity to respect his courage, and to release him from his bonds. He retained him, however, as a hostage, and demanded honourable terms of peace for his ransom. The Romans, indeed, pretend that he insisted on the evacuation of the Dacian soil to the banks of the Danube, together with an indemnity for the expenses of the war. Whatever were the terms really proposed, Trajan, much as he valued his officer, could not assent to them. Nothing but the overthrow of

Device of Decebalus to obtain favourable terms.

ture. The Roman foot is to the English as 11.5 : 12. Paget's estimate of 3900 feet for the length would be more than 500 feet short of Dion's. The height, according to Dion's statement, seems to me incredible. He was himself governor of Pannonia about 120 years later, but the bridge had been overthrown long before. The piers, of course, were of stone, but the superstructure must have been of wood, which, indeed, is borne out by the sculptures of the Trajan column.

Decebalus and the thorough conquest of his whole realm, would now satisfy him. He returned, however, an evasive answer, by which he deterred the enemy from slaying his prisoner. Longinus, sensible of the difficulty in which his leader was involved, determined to relieve him by his own voluntary death. Pretending to concert a reconciliation between the two chiefs, he sent a freedman to Trajan, with a secret message conjuring him to prosecute the war with unflinching vigour. Meanwhile he had got possession of some poison, which, as soon as the messenger left him, he swallowed. When Decebalus discovered that he had been cajoled, he demanded the surrender of the freedman, offering to return the dead body in exchange; but Trajan magnanimously refused to barter the living for the dead, and the Dacian's revenge was frustrated.[1]

Gallantry of Longinus.

While the bridge was building, Trajan was preparing the plan of his campaign, collecting his forces and magazines, and negotiating with the neighbouring tribes. He crossed the Danube with an overwhelming force, and extended his operations over a large tract of country, constructing roads and planting fortifications, to form a secure basis for the complete reduction of the Dacian strongholds. He seems to have struck eastward, as far at least as the Schyl, or Aluta, and thence to have ascended to the Rothenthurm, from which he burst with irresistible fury on the valley of the Maros. Decebalus was wholly unable to contend with him in the field, but still maintained an obstinate but aimless and ineffectual defence behind the streams or among the defiles of the mountains, till he was finally driven into the heart of Transylvania. Such a campaign may have exercised the skill of the Roman general and his officers, and given scope to

Defeat of the Dacians, and death of Decebalus, A.D. 106.

[1] Dion, lxviii. 12.

the display of personal valour and conduct in his soldiers; but it was distinguished by no glorious exploits of arms, and the poem which Pliny urges his friend Caninius to consecrate to it, must have been overlaid with heavy descriptions of mechanical operations, or have evaporated in a cloud of dull panegyrics, but for the devotion of Longinus and other feats of personal heroism, such as were never wanting in the Roman armies.[1] Trajan's final success was indeed secured by the defection of the Sarmatians, the Iazyges, and the Burri, from the common cause of the barbarians. All the passes were now in the hands of the Romans, and the central regions fell step by step into their possession. The hill fort, in which the Dacian chieftain held his residence, was stormed after a desperate resistance, and Decebalus fell on his own sword amidst the ruins of his capital. The nobles of the conquered land followed the example of their sovereign, first firing their houses, and then handing round the poisoned bowl. Such is the scene represented on the column at Rome, which still records in monumental sculpture the chief features of this memorable struggle. The head of Decebalus was sent as a trophy to Rome, a downward step towards barbarism, which marks the coarseness of feeling engendered in the frontier camps of civilization. Decebalus had concealed his treasures under a heap of stones in the bed of a river, the stream of which had been first turned, and then suffered to flow again over it.[2] The captives employed in the work

[1] Pliny, *Epist.* viii. 1.: "Quæ tam recens, tam copiosa, tam lata, quæ denique tam poetica et, quanquam in verissimis rebus, tam fabulosa materia?" The delineation of the bridge on the Trajan column is followed by that of sieges and skirmishes, rather than of regular battles.

[2] Dion, lxviii. 14, calls this river the Sargetia (the Strehl), on which Zermizegethusa or Varhely stood. But this valley had been acquired in the first campaign, and the spot where the treasures were concealed might be expected to be more remote.

had been put to death to prevent its disclosure. Nevertheless the secret had been revealed to Trajan, and the precious hoards thus recovered sufficed to reward the valour of the veterans, to defray the expenses of the war, and to perpetuate the memory of the achievement by the column erected in a new forum at Rome.[1]

Dacia reduced to the form of a province.

The resistance of the Dacians, broken, abandoned, and already more than half-subdued, ceased with the death of their chief. Trajan had determined to add another wide province to the empire. A long period of restless aggressions, checked occasionally, and chastised with bloody severity, followed by four years of war carried on in the heart of the country with all the barbarity of a ruder age, and all the means and resources of the imperial civilization, had exhausted, and, as it would seem, nearly depopulated the whole of Dacia. The emperor invited settlers from all parts of his dominions, and repeopled the land with so many Roman colonists,—with colonists at least of Latin race and speech,—that the language of the empire became, and to this day substantially remains, the national tongue of a large portion of the inhabitants.[2] The possession of the territory was secured by the foundation of four colonies at Zermizegethusa, Apulum, Napuca, and Cerna.[3] The extent of the new province,

[1] A part of Trajan's spoil was dedicated to Jupiter Casius. Suidas: *Κάσιος Ζεὺς ἔνθα Τραϊανὸς ἀνέθηκε κρατῆρας ἀργυροῦς, ἀκροθίνια τῆς κατὰ τῶν Γετῶν νίκης.* Hadrian furnished the votive inscription: *Ζηνὶ τόδ' Αἰνεάδης Κασίῳ Τραϊανὸς ἄγαλμα.* The second war ended in 106. "Trajan. imp. v. cons. v." See the medals.

[2] Eutrop. viii. 3.: "Ex toto orbe Rom. infinitas eo copias hominum transtulerat, ad agros et urbes colendas. Dacia enim diuturno bello Decebali viris fuerat exhausta." Trajan introduced the novel principle of forbidding the transplantation of citizens from Italy; but whether before or after the foundation of his own colonies in Dacia does not appear. Capitolinus speaks of a later emperor who violated this rule (*M. Aurel.* 11.): "Hispaniis exhaustis, Italica allectione, contra Trajani præcepta, verecunde consuluit."

[3] The first of these was officially designated Col. Ulpia Trajana,

which was bounded by the Danube on the south, by the Theiss on the west, by the Carpathians on the north, was not perhaps accurately determined amid the boundless steppes in which it lost itself eastward. Ptolemy indeed makes the Hierassus, or Pruth, the eastern frontier; but Roman plantations, and possibly military stations also reached even to the Dniester, and some critics have imagined that the Roman occupation was propagated as far as the Don.[1] The narrow strip between the Theiss and the Danube, from which the Dacian tribes had been expelled by the people known as the Iazyges Metanastæ, seems, strange as it may appear, to have been never included in any Roman province.[2] It was no doubt a tract of mere swamp and jungle. The triple division of the Dacian province into Ripensis, Apulensis, and Alpensis, refers to the three districts of Wallachia, the Banat with Transylvania, and the upper valley of the Theiss, or the hill country from which that stream descends. Mœsia now ceased to be a frontier province; the great road which led into the mountains along the banks of the Aluta conveyed the presidiary legions from the stations they had so long occupied on the Danube to the heart of Transylvania. Nevertheless Mœsia might still retain its importance, as a base of operations, if force should ever be required to retain the conquered Dacians in subjection, and Trajan took

and may be traced, from inscriptions and other remains, at Varhely. Apulum (Col. Apulensis, Ulpian. *Dig.* xv. 8.) is supposed to be Karlsburg in the upper valley of the Maros. Napuca is identified by the distances in the Peutinger Table with Maros-Vasarhely. (Francke, p. 173.) Cerna or Dierna (Ptolem. iii. 8. 10.) is mentioned as a colony of Trajan by Ulpian, *l. c.* It seems to have stood on the little stream which bears the name of Tjerna, and to have been at or near to Mehadia, long celebrated for its saline baths.

[1] Francke, p. 180.

[2] The geography of Dacia is known chiefly from a chapter in Ptolemy (iii. 8.), to which a few notices may be added from the Augustan Histories and the inscriptions. See Francke's *Gesch. Trajans*, and Marquardt (Becker's *Handb. der Alterth.* iii. 1. 108.).

further measures to secure it by the establishment within it of the two colonies of Œscus and Ratiaria on the river-bank.[1] He built also the town of Nicopolis, named after his victories, in a strong position on the slopes of the Hæmus. To him and his lieutenants are ascribed the vestiges of Roman causeways, and of ramparts and trenches long supposed to be Roman, with which the lowlands of Wallachia and the Banat are still deeply scarred; but the last at least, whether their date precede or follow the Roman occupation, are now generally considered to be the works of the barbarians.

The monuments of the Dacian conquest.

Of the Dacian province, the last acquired and the first to be surrendered of the Roman possessions, if we except some transient occupations, soon to be commemorated, in the East, not many traces now exist; but even these may suffice to mark the moulding power of Roman civilization, which impressed on this distant region the same type of culture which we recognise in Spain and Britain, in Africa and Asia. The conquests of Trajan are indelibly engraved on coins and marbles, while the accents of the old Roman tongue still echo in the valleys of Hungary and Wallachia; the descendants of the Dacians at the present day repudiate the appellation of Wallachs, or strangers, and still claim the name of Romúni. Interesting, however, as these records are of a conquest which left such slight and transient political traces, the wars of Dacia are more eminently distinguished by their sculptured monument, still standing in its pristine majesty, and embalmed in the glory of nearly eighteen centuries, the column of Trajan at Rome. After his return to

[1] Ratiaria is placed at or near to Widdin. Œscus lay considerably further east. Trajan's Nicopolis (Νικόπολις περὶ Αἷμον, Ptol.) mentioned by Amm. Marcell. xxxi. 5. 16. and placed by Jornandes on the Iatra (mod. Iantra), is not to be confounded with the modern Nicopolis or Nikup, on the Danube. See Francke, p. 160.

Rome, and the celebration of a triumph, with spectacles on a grander scale than ever, the conqueror of Dacia resolved to immortalize the memory of his epoch, by the construction of a forum which should surpass in extent and splendour every similar work of the Cæsars before him.[1] The emperors, from Julius downwards, had contributed towards opening an outlet for the traffic of the old Roman forum into the Campus Martius, to the right of the Capitoline. But this eminence, which now stands out disconnected from the encircling ridge of the Roman hills, was, down to this period, no more than a bold projecting spur of the Quirinal, and the slope which united the one with the other, formed a barrier to the advance of the imperial builders. The splendours of the city, and the splendours of the Campus beyond it, were still separated by a narrow isthmus, thronged perhaps with the squalid cabins of the poor, and surmounted by the remains of the Servian wall which ran along its summit.[2] Step by step the earlier emperors had approached with their new forums to the foot of this obstruction. Domitian was the first to contemplate and commence its removal.[3] Nerva had the fortune to consecrate and to give his own name to a portion of his predecessor's

Trajan's forum.

[1] Dion, lxviii. 15., specifies the number of days of these spectacles, viz. 123; the number of beasts slain, viz. 11,000; the number of gladiators who fought, viz. 10,000. This triumph was celebrated A. D. 107, A. U. 860.

[2] The fact of this connexion between the Quirinal and the Capitoline seems to be put beyond a doubt by the inscription on the base of the Trajan column, which purports to have been erected to show how deep was the excavation made for the area of the forum: "Ad declarandum quantæ altitudinis mons et locus tantis operibus sit egestus." This statement is confirmed by the words of Dion, lxviii. 16.: *ἐς ἐπίδειξιν τοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἀγορὰν ἔργου· πάντος γὰρ τοῦ χωρίου ἐκείνου ὀρεινοῦ ὄντος, κατέσκαψε τοσοῦτον ὅσον ὁ κίων ἀνίσχει, καὶ τὴν ἀγορὰν ἐκ τούτου πεδινὴν κατεσκεύασε*; but it seems quite inexplicable.

[3] Victor, *Cæs.* 13.: "Adhuc Romæ a Domitiano cœpta fora, atque alia multa plusquam magnifica coluit ornavitque."

construction[1]; but Trajan undertook to complete the bold design, and the genius of his architect triumphed over all obstacles, and executed a work which exceeded in extent and splendour any previous achievement of the kind. He swept away every building on the site, levelled the spot on which they had stood, and laid out a vast area of columnar galleries connecting halls and chambers for public use and recreation. The new forum was adorned with two libraries, one for Greek, the other for Roman volumes, and it was bounded on the west by a basilica of magnificent dimensions. Beyond this basilica, and within the limits of the Campus, the same architect erected a temple for the worship of Trajan himself; but this work belonged probably to the reign of Trajan's successor, and no doubt the Ulpian forum, with all its adjuncts, occupied many years in building.[2] The area was adorned with numerous statues, in which the figure of Trajan was frequently repeated, and among its decorations were groups in bronze or marble representing his most illustrious actions. The balustrades and cornices of the whole mass of buildings flamed with gilded images of arms and horses. Here stood the great equestrian statue of the emperor; here was the triumphal arch decreed him by

Libraries, basilica and temple.

[1] Suet. *Domit.* 5.: "Forum quod nunc Nervæ vocatur." This forum was also called *Transitorium* or *Pervium*; it seems undoubtedly to have been begun by Domitian, or, rather, by Vespasian, and to have been adorned with Domitian's temple of Minerva; hence "*Palladium* forum."

[2] Apollodorus is specified as the architect by Dion, lxix. 4. The authorities for the description of the forum, &c., are numerous, and have been collected by the topographers. See Becker, p. 378. foll. It is most improbable that the temple of Trajan should have been erected during his lifetime, and the place it occupied beyond the basilica seems to show that it was a later addition. Trajan's triumphal arch was completed or decorated by Hadrian, as appears from a figure of Hadrian's favourite Antinous on one of the medallions which have been transferred from it to the arch of Constantine. Müller, *Denkmäler der Alten Kunst*, p. 51.

the senate, adorned with sculpture, which Constantine, two centuries later, transferred without a blush to his own, a barbarous act of the first Christian emperor, to which however we probably owe their preservation to this day from still more barbarous spoliation.[1]

Trajan's column.

Amidst this profusion of splendour the great object to which the eye was principally directed was the column, which rose majestically in the centre of the forum to the height of 128 feet, sculptured from the base of the shaft to the summit with the story of the Dacian wars, shining in every volute and moulding with gold and pigments, and crowned with the colossal effigy of the august conqueror.[2] The Greek and Roman artists had long felt the want of some device for breaking the horizontal lines so prevalent in their architecture; and to this feeling we may perhaps attribute the erection of the Egyptian obelisks, by Augustus and others, in the public places of Rome. The Greeks seem to have often used the column for this purpose[3]; but a column, the emblem of supporting power, with nothing to rest upon it, however graceful in itself, must have seemed to lack meaning, which the urn or ball by which it was sometimes surmounted would hardly supply. The statue, however, of a god or a hero imparted at least a moral dignity to the pillar, on which

[1] The subjects of these bas-reliefs show that they belonged to Trajan's arch. The arch of Constantine may have been preserved in ages of Christian barbarism by respect for the memory of the great Christian emperor. Vopiscus (in *Prob.* 2.) speaks of the books of Trajan's libraries as removed to the baths of Diocletian, a dangerous locality for such combustible articles. But we gather from Sidonius Apollinaris that they still occupied their original place in the fifth century.

[2] The column is referred to in Gell. xiii. 24.; Pausan. v. 12. 6.; Amm. Marcell. xvi. 11. See the topographers, &c. For the fact that it was coloured, see Francke, *Gesch. Traj.* p. 188.

[3] The fashion of placing statues on columns was adopted from the Greeks. See Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xxxvi. 6.

it might seem to have alighted on its flight from heaven to earth, or from earth to heaven. The proportions of the Trajan column are peculiarly graceful; the compact masses of stone, nineteen in number, of which the whole shaft is composed, may lead us to admire the skill employed in its construction; but the most interesting feature of this historic monument is the spiral band of figures which throughout encircles it.[1] To the subjects of Trajan himself this record of his exploits in bold relief must have given a vivid and sufficient idea of the people, the places, and the actions indicated; even to us, after so many centuries, they furnish a correct type of the arms, the arts, and the costume both of the Romans and barbarians which we should vainly seek for elsewhere. The Trajan column forms a notable chapter in the pictorial history of Rome.

Acquisitions of Cornelius Palma in Arabia.

Nor was the conquest of Dacia the only triumph of the Roman arms under the auspices of a soldier-emperor. At the same moment, while Trajan was advancing the frontiers in the north, his lieutenant Cornelius Palma, the governor of Syria, was annexing a new district to the great proconsulate of the East. The ill-defined frontier from Damascus to the Red Sea was always subject to attack from the petty half-nomade chiefs, who flitted from tent to village along the border of the Arabian desert. The principal stations of the tribes who caused this constant annoyance were at Gerasa, Bostra, Philadelphia, and Petra, and it was necessary to protect the eastern slopes of the Jordan valley by the complete reduction of these places.[2] A single

[1] The statue of Trajan had long fallen from its lofty pedestal when it was replaced with a figure of St. Peter by Pope Sixtus V. Beneath the column was a sepulchral chamber, designed for the ashes of the emperor.

[2] Dion, lxviii. 14., whose epitomizer dismisses the subject in a single sentence. Ammian. Marcell. xiv. 8.: "Hæc quoque civitates

campaign, conducted with energy and determination, sufficed perhaps to lodge the Roman eagles in these border citadels, from whence the country could be kept in permanent subjection. The great caravan lines between the Euphrates and the Red Sea were secured. The emporiums of Arabian commerce were placed under the authority of Roman governors, and enjoyed for some centuries the protection of Roman garrisons. Among them Petra rose to peculiar eminence, and the remarkable ruins still existing on its site attest at least the extent of its population and the splendour of its architecture. This district, which was one of the latest of the Roman acquisitions, continued to be attached to the empire for several succeeding centuries.[1]

The ideas of the great conquering people were still dilating with the swelling consciousness of their power and magnificence. The vast dimensions of Trajan's architectural structure might put to blush the imperial builders of earlier times. The Ulpian forum, with all its accessories, occupied a larger space than those of Julius, Augustus, and Nerva together; while the open area of the old Roman forum might have been contained within the precincts of the Ulpian basilica alone.[2] It is much to be regretted

habet inter oppida quædam ingentes, Bostram et Gerasam et Philadelphiam. Hanc, provinciæ imposito nomine, rectoreque attributo, obtemperare legibus nostris Trajanus compulit imperator." Damascus, hitherto subjected nominally to the rule of a native family, which bore the name of Aretas, and resided in Petra (Joseph. *Antiq.* xiii. 15. 2.; S. Paul, 2 *Cor.* xi. 32.), though occupied by a Roman garrison (Joseph. *Antiq.* xiv. 11. 7.), was now formally incorporated in the Syrian province. Becker, *Handb. der Alterthümer*, iii. 1. 183.; Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.* iii. p. 330.

[1] Dion, lxxv. 1, 2.; Eutrop. viii. 18. See also the *Notitia dign.* (Becker, *Alterthümer*, iii. 1. 203.) The people of Petra and Bostra accepted the date of the Roman conquest for their chronological era. *Chron. Pasch.* i. p. 472.: Πετραῖοι καὶ Βοστρηνοὶ ἐντεῦθεν τοὺς ἑαυτῶν χρόνους ἀριθμοῦσι, *i. e.* from A. D. 105.

[2] See the ichnography of this series of buildings in Becker's *Handbuch*, taken from Canina's *Indicazione Topografica*, and adopted in the art. "Roma;" Smith's *Dict. of Class. Geography.*

that no account of it, and indeed no reference to it, is given by a contemporary author. But Martial, who has supplied us with many hints at least of the architectural glories of Nero and Domitian, had retired to his native Bilbilis before the commencement of the works in which the grandiosity of Spanish taste was first exemplified in marble; the panegyric of Pliny had been already pronounced, and the letters comprised in his collection belong to an earlier date.[1] Juvenal, who is not wholly silent on other buildings of Trajan, has no allusion to the forum or the column; and indeed this writer, while he describes life at Rome in almost every line of almost all his satires, is strangely deficient in topographical notices. Tacitus reserved a work on the *Affairs of Trajan* for the solace of an old age which possibly he never attained. Since the fall of Domitian Suetonius has deserted us, and the era at which we are now arrived stands on the verge of a great chasm in Roman literature. At a much later period we get occasional glimpses of the Ulpian forum, which seems to have long retained its paramount dignity among the remains of ancient magnificence. It was here that the emperors long sat in state, attended by the lictors with their gilded fasces; and here, in the last decline or revival of old traditions, when there were no longer emperors at Rome, the consuls continued to create new Quirites by manumission on the kalends of January.[2] When the second of the Christian and Byzantine Cæsars visited the abandoned capital, he was struck with the

Few remaining notices of the Ulpian forum.

[1] The date of the dedication of the Trajan column is inscribed on its base, and answers to the 17th year of his reign, A.D. 114. The latest of Pliny's letters that can be dated belongs to the year 107; but the period of his death is unknown.

[2] Claudian, xxviii. 646.: "Desuetaque cingit
Regius auratis fora fascibus Ulpia lictor."
Sidon. Apoll.: "Ad Ulpia poscunt
Te fora donabis quos libertate Quirites."

glories of this spot, which even then had no rival in splendour under heaven.[1] Even its decorations seem to have been singularly respected. Five hundred years after the Dacian triumph, when Rome had been taken and retaken by Goths, Lombards, and Greeks, and had suffered from earthquakes and inundations, from natural decay and squalid poverty, more than even from the violence of the spoiler, a legend, which seems not wholly groundless, relates how Pope Gregory the Great, traversing the forum of Trajan, was struck with the sight of a group in bronze, one of the many works still conspicuous on the spot, in which a generous action of its imperial founder was vividly represented.[2]

Other buildings of Trajan in the city.

The Ulpian forum, however, though the largest and the most interesting, was by no means the only construction of this emperor at Rome. No reign perhaps was marked by more extensive alterations and additions to the existing features of the city. Trajan prolonged the series of halls and porticos which decorated the Campus Martius, among which the Pantheon and the Julian mausoleum still rose pre-eminent in grandeur. He constructed a theatre in the same quarter, which was remarkable from its circular shape; he added another gymnasium and another odeum to the places of the kind already existing, consecrated to the display of Grecian arts and accomplishments; he gave to the

[1] See the account of the visit of Constantius in Ammianus, xvi. 6.: "Cum ad Trajani forum venisset, singularem sub omni cælo structuram." Cassiodor. *Variar.* vii. 6.; Victor, *de Region.* viii.

[2] The incident is related by the biographers of Gregory, John and Paul Diaconus, and by John of Salisbury, *de Curial. Magis.* v. 8. The group represented Trajan dismounting to listen to a female petitioner, who would not be put off with a distant promise of an audience when he should return from the wars. The pontiff, it is added, prayed for the soul of the righteous heathen, and received an assurance that Trajan's soul should be released from purgatory. Comp. Dante, *Purgat.* x. 73.; *Parad.* xx. 40. As regards the female petitioner, Dion, it may be observed, tells the story of Hadrian, lxix. 6.

people new thermæ, the site of which was near to those of Titus, if indeed they were not actually an extension of the Flavian edifice.[1] He brought the waters of the lake Sabatinus to the Janiculus, thus adding a tenth to the nine existing aqueducts of the city.[2] There seems ground for supposing that he completed the arch of Titus, still unfinished, on the Velia. The Circus Maximus had been arranged by Julius Cæsar for the reception of the whole Roman people, with a lower story of masonry and wooden galleries above. The wood-work had been swept away by Nero's fire; the restoration of this favourite resort had been conducted by succeeding emperors; but Trajan earned popularity by enlarging its accommodation, whereby room was obtained for the still increasing multitude of the citizens.[3] While, however, the magnificent emperor was intent on raising the abode of the Romans to the level of their fortunes, inundations and earthquakes, the most ancient and inveterate of her foes, were making havoc of many of her noblest buildings; the fragments still remaining of Nero's brilliant palace were consumed by fire, the Pantheon was stricken by lightning, and the calamities which befel the mistress of the world might point a moral for a Christian writer of a much later date, who ascribed them to the judgment of God on a persecutor of his holy religion.[4]

Of this hereafter. The princely prodigality of Trajan's taste was defrayed by the plunder or tribute of conquered enemies, and seems to have laid at least no extraordinary burdens on his subjects. His rage

[1] Pausan. *l. c.*
[2] Becker's *Alterthümer*, i. p. 706.
[3] Plin. *Paneg.* 51. Comp. Dion, lxviii. 7. The text of Pliny makes the additional seats only 5,000, which seems absurd. Cæsar made room for 260,000, and at a later period we read of 385,000 or even 485,000 spectators. Possibly all these numbers are corrupt.
[4] Orosius, vii. 12. To guard against these disasters Trajan limited the height of private dwellings to sixty feet, or ten feet below the maximum allowed by Augustus. Victor, *Epit.* 13.

for building had the further merit of being directed for the most part to works of public interest and utility. He built for the gods, the senate, and the people, not for himself; he restored the temples, enlarged the halls and places of public resort; but he was content himself with the palaces of his predecessors.[1] Not in Rome only, but in innumerable places throughout Italy and the provinces, the hand of Trajan was conspicuous in the structures he executed, some of which still attest the splendour of the epoch, and the large-minded patriotism of their author. An arch at Ancona still reminds us that here he constructed a haven for his navy on the upper sea; and the port of Civita Vecchia is still sheltered by the mole he cast into the waters to defend the roadstead of Centumcellæ.[2] The bridge over the Tagus at Alcantara affirms, by an inscription still legible upon it, that it was built by Julius Lacer, one of Trajan's favourite architects, though the cost was defrayed, according to the same interesting record, by the local contributions of some rich and spirited communities.[3] A writer three centuries later declares of Trajan that he *built the world over;* and the wide diffusion and long continuance of his fame, beyond that of so many others of the imperial series, may be partly attributed to

Trajan's architectural works in the provinces.

[1] Pliny even praises Trajan for his great moderation in building, at least within the walls of Rome: "Idem tam parcus in ædificando quam diligens in tuendo." *Paneg.* 51. But the *Panegyricus*, it must be remembered, refers only to the commencement of the reign.

[2] Pliny, *Epist.* vi. 31., describes the port of Centumcellæ. Comp. coins in Eckhel, inscriptions in Gruter, &c. To this, according to the scholiast, Juvenal alludes, xii. 75.:

"Tandem intrat positas inclusa per æquora moles,
Tyrrhenamque Pharon, porrectaque brachia rursum."

[3] Francke, *Gesch. Trajans*, p. 584., after Gruter and others. The dimensions of this work, as given by Brotier, are: height, 200 feet, length 670, width 28; arches 6, each of 80 feet span: all, of course, in French measure. Trajan erected bridges also over the Rhine, the Euphrates and the Tigris.

the constant recurrence of his name conspicuously inscribed on the most solid and best known monuments of the empire.[1] The greatest of his successors, the illustrious Constantine, full of admiration for his genius, and touched perhaps with some envy of his glory, compared him pleasantly to a wallflower, which clings for support to the stones on which it flourishes so luxuriantly.[2]

Trajan's vigilance in the administration of the provinces.

The care of this wise and liberal ruler extended from the harbours, aqueducts, and bridges, to the general repair of the highways of the empire. Nor was it only as the restorer of military discipline or the reviver of the old tradition of conquest, that he took in charge the communications which were originally designed chiefly for military purposes.[3] He was the great improver, though not the inventor, of the system of posts upon the chief roads, which formed a striking feature of Roman civilization as an instrument for combining the remotest provinces under a centralized administration.[4] The extent to which the domestic concerns of every distant municipium were subjected to the prince's supervision is curiously pourtrayed in

[1] Eutrop. viii. 2.: "Orbem terrarum ædificans." Several coins of families, e.g. Æmilia, Cassia, Cornelia and others, attest the restoration by Trajan of temples and basilicas erected by the great men of the republic. See Brotier's Tacitus: in Append. Chronol., A. U. C. 856.

[2] Victor, *Epit* 60.: "Hic (Constantinus) Trajanum herbam parieariam, ob titulos multis ædibus inscriptos appellare solitus erat."

[3] The roads constructed or repaired by Trajan are carefully enumerated by Francke, pp. 577–583.; *i.e.* 1. on the northern side of Italy between Auximum and Aquileja; 2. the Appian Way; 3. from Beneventum to Brundisium; 4. various roads in Spain. They are for the most part ascertained from inscriptions.

[4] Victor, *Cæs.* 13.: "Noscendis ocius quæ ubique e republica gerebantur admota media publici cursus." Comp. Plin. *Epist.* x. 54, 55. The system had been originally set up by Augustus (Suet. *Octav.* 49.), as has been mentioned in an earlier chapter. The minute economy of its administration appears in divers letters of Pliny to Trajan, in which he excuses himself for what might be considered an illegitimate use of it, x. 30, 31, 121, 122. ed. Gierig.

the letters of Pliny, who appears, as governor of Bithynia, to have felt it incumbent on him to consult his master on the answer he should return to every petition of the provincials, whether they wanted to construct an aqueduct, to erect a gymnasium, or to cover a common sewer.[1] It is possible indeed that the courtly prefect may, in this instance, have been over obsequious, and Trajan himself seems almost to resent the importunity with which he begs to have an architect sent him from Rome. *Are there no such artists in your province or elsewhere?* asks the emperor. *It is from Greece that the architects come to Rome, and Greece is nearer to you than Italy.*[2] These works, whether of convenience or splendour, were, it seems, generally constructed by the governing bodies in the provinces themselves and by local taxation, though assisted not uncommonly by imperial munificence. Wealthy citizens might continue, as of old, thus to gratify their own vanity, taste, or generosity, of which Pliny is himself an example; but the days of the splendid magnates, who pretended to rival the prince in their lavish expenditure, had passed away, and it was upon the master of the empire

[1] Plin. *Epist.* x. 21, 22. 47, 48. 57. 61. 70–73. 98, 99. (ed. Gierig). We may be surprised at the minuteness of the supervision exercised by the central government, as exemplified in these records. This was, however, no novelty in the Roman administration, which under the free state was at least equally jealous and exacting. See an anecdote in Vitruvius i. 4.: "In Apulia oppidum Salpia vetus . . . . ex quo incolæ quotannis ægrotando laborantes aliquando pervenerunt ad M. Hostilium, eoque publice petentes impetraverunt, uti his idoneum locum ad mœnia transferenda conquireret, eligeretque. Tunc is moratus non est, sed statim, rationibus doctissime quæsitis, secundum mare mercatus est possessionem loco salubri: ab senatuque pop. que Rom. petiit ut sineret transferre oppidum," &c.

[2] Plin. *Epist.* x. 33, 34. Whether an architect was to be sought for from Greece or Rome, it shows how small the class of intelligent artists must have been throughout the empire, that a province like Bithynia, which contained such great cities as Nicæa and Nicomedia, was obliged to look so far for an architect. See the remarks of Dubois-Guchan, *Tacite et son Siècle*, i. 564.

and proprietor of the fiscus that the burden continued more and more to fall.[1]

While the chief functionaries of the state subsided into mere agents of police, the senate itself, even under the most obliging of its princes, abdicated its duties, and left to him the initiative in every work of public interest. The emperor had become the sole legislator, the sole administrator, the sole overseer of the commonwealth, and at last he found himself almost its sole benefactor also. A mere selfish voluptuary might neglect or repudiate this duty, but a prince of sense and honour acknowledged the obligation of providing, from the resources placed in his hands, for every object of general utility. The endowment of the professors of learning by Vespasian seems to have been made from the fisc. Domitian, in the midst of his necessities, had respected this allocation of the imperial treasures; but his own liberality was probably confined to establishing the paltry prizes of his Capitoline and Alban games. The ordinary largesses of grain by which the citizen of the lower ranks was almost wholly supported, had been extended by Augustus to infants, and the munificence of successive governments had added, from time to time, the condiments of wine, oil, and bacon to the produce of the Egyptian wheat-fields; but Nerva seems to have first introduced the habit of providing a special endowment in money for the children of the poor, and more particularly for orphans. This prince's charity was casual, and imperfect. It was reserved for Trajan to expand it into a system, and

Trajan's economical measures.

Alimentation of children.

[1] Pliny's munificence was on a small scale, as befitted the modest position of an advocate and man of letters. See an instance in *Ep.* iv. 4. Licinius Sura, a wealthy and ambitious noble, built a gymnasium for the Roman people. A small part only of the liberality of Herodes Atticus, of whom more hereafter, was bestowed on the Romans. Dion, lxviii. 15.

establish it as an imperial institution. Of the origin of this *alimentation* there is no trace. We can only imagine the motive for it in the anxiety so long manifested by government for the increase of the free population, and its wish to encourage legitimate wedlock.[1] The provision itself is recorded on many coins of Trajan and his successors, and is mentioned generally by the historians; but it is from the inscribed tablet of Veleia that we derive our full knowledge of its extent and character.[2] If we may venture to apply to Rome and to Italy generally the data thus acquired with regard to one obscure municipium, it would seem that there was a graduated scale of endowment for male and female children, for legitimate and illegitimate, sufficient for their entire maintenance, and that the whole number of recipients throughout the peninsula might amount to 300,000.[3] This provision was continued up to the eighteenth year for males, and to the fourteenth for females. The number of boys thus supported would seem to have been ten times that of girls; and though the care of the government might naturally be directed

[1] Plin. *Paneg.* 26.: "Hi subsidium bellorum, ornamentum pacis, publicis sumptibus aluntur . . . . ex his castra, ex his tribus replebantur."

[2] For the coins and inscriptions see Eckhel and Gruter. The tablet referred to is an inscribed plate of bronze, found in the neighbourhood of Placentia in the year 1747, from which the character of the institution has been deduced by the learning and ingenuity of Muratori, Maffei, Gori and Terrasson.

[3] Such is the calculation of Francke (*Gesch. Trajans*, p. 413.) on the assumption that the number relieved, and the scale of relief at Veleia (including Placentia and Liburna), may be taken as an index to the whole of Italy. But for this we have not sufficient warrant. On the contrary, we might perhaps infer that the munificence of Trajan was local rather than universal, from the fact that Pliny undertakes to establish a fund for the relief of his own townspeople at Comum: *Epist.* vii. 18. In his *Panegyricus* (c 28.) Pliny specifies the number of 5000 infants whom Trajan had thus endowed, but possibly in Rome only; but this refers to an early period in his reign.

to the one sex more than to the other, the disproportion seems, nevertheless, to point significantly to the fact, of which we have had other indications, of the frequent abandonment of female children.[1] The sums by which this system was maintained were advanced doubtless by the fiscus. Loans were made to the local proprietors for the cultivation or improvement of their estates, at the reduced rate of five per cent., instead of the twelve per cent. which was ordinarily demanded.[2] The tablet of Veleia specifies the names of forty-six such proprietors, with the sums borrowed by each, and the security in land they offered for them. If we may further believe that the emperor engaged not to call in the principal, the liberality of the government would amount to the final surrender of a large capital, on the receipt of less than half the returns that might have been fairly exacted for it. The sum thus raised annually in the little town of Veleia might amount to about 400*l.* of our money, which was not insufficient for the maintenance of 300 poor children[3]; but if the above explanation of the transaction be correct, it would seem that the landowners who were accommodated on such easy terms, were gainers by the imperial benevolence no less than the children themselves. The system,

[1] It was the practice of a special class of dealers to rear children deserted by their parents, in order to sell them as slaves. The trade was recognised and regulated by law, and many intricate questions arose from the claims of the parents to their children in after life. See Pliny, *Epist.* x. 74, 75. Such children were called "altelli."

[2] Such is the explanation of Hegewisch and his translator Solvet (*Epoque la plus heureuse*, &c.), followed by Francke, and apparently the true one. Comp. Dion, lxviii. 5.: *ὡς καὶ ταῖς πόλεσι ταῖς ἐν Ἰταλίᾳ πρὸς τὴν τῶν παίδων τροφὴν πολλὰ χαρίσασθαι, καὶ τούτοις εὐεργετῶν.* That the endowment was derived, not from a tax on the proprietors, but in a certain sense from the imperial treasury, appears from Pliny's phrase "alimenta de tuo;" and this may be reconciled with the "publico sumptu" of the inscriptions by reference to the fiscus, the private treasure of the emperor derived from public sources.

[3] See Francke's calculations, p. 412.; on the supposition that specie was worth ten times its present value.

whatever was its real character, took firm root, and was carried further by the endowments of later rulers. We must regard it, on the whole, as an indirect attempt to make the provinces, by which the fiscus was supplied, contribute to the support of Italy. Of the various modes by which this end had been sought, the alimentation of Trajan was the most specious; but it was not less really the exaction of a tribute, such as Italy, in her days of conquest, had been wont to demand openly; but in those days she gave at least her own blood in exchange for the gold of the provincials; now she had ceased even to recruit the legions.

Measures for the special benefit of Italy.

The legislation, indeed, of this popular emperor is marked generally by a special consideration for Italian interests; and this circumstance is to be borne in mind, when we remark the acclamations with which he was greeted by Pliny, the mouthpiece of the nobility, and the favour in which he was held by the later generations, who referred, no doubt, to the testimony of this class only. Even Trajan's wide experience, his acquaintance and personal connexion with the provinces, failed in expanding his views to the conception of himself as sovereign of the whole empire. He was still the emperor of the Romans, perhaps, in this sense, the last emperor of the Romans. While the world was rapidly assimilating itself to a single type, and imbibing the idea of its common interests, he fixed his mind on the narrow notions of the past, and tried to perpetuate the selfish principle of monopoly and conquest. His meagre and futile attempts, indeed, to maintain the old Italian or Roman policy, show how vain was now the endeavour to prop the prosperity of one section of the empire by the sacrifice of the rest, even though that section was the sacred soil of Italy herself. The attempt to attach the wealth of the world to a single spot, by requiring the candi-

dates for public office to hold one-third of their landed property in Italy, was a futile recurrence to obsolete notions unsuited to the genius of the times.[1] The relaxations introduced by Trajan into the tax on successions, to which, since the time of Augustus, the Romans had fully reconciled themselves, were designed as an encouragement to undertake citizenship, a boon which was felt at this period to be of doubtful value, but about which, as a military ruler, he was doubly anxious. The measures by which he secured a constant supply of grain from the provinces, exempting its exportation from all duties, and stimulating the growers at one extremity of the empire to relieve the deficiencies of another, were directed to the maintenance of abundance in Rome and Italy. Thus on the casual failure of the harvest in Egypt, her empty granaries were for once replenished from the superfluous stores of Gaul, Spain, or Africa.[2]

In other particulars also which interested the feelings of the senatorial class, Trajan recurred to the principles of ancient usage. He refrained from demanding the consulship annually, and held the chief magistracy five times only during his possession of power. Whether in the curule chair, or on the benches of the senators, he was equally moderate in language and demeanour, recalling to the minds of his delighted colleagues the days of republican

[1] Plin. *Epist.* v. 19.: "Patrimonii tertiam partem conferre jussit in ea quæ solo continerentur, deforme arbitratus, ut erat, *honorem petituros* urbem Italiamque, non pro patria sed pro hospitio aut stabulo, quasi peregrinantes, habere." This enactment was, in strictness, limited to the candidates for magistracies. The proportion was relaxed to a fourth part by the emperor Antoninus. Capitol. in *Anton.* 11.

[2] Plin. *Paneg.* 29–32.: "Percrebuerat antiquitus urbem nostram nisi opibus Ægypti ali non posse. Superbiebat ventosa et insolens natio. . . . Refudimus Nilo suas copias . . . discat igitur Ægyptus non alimenta se nobis sed tributa præstare. . . . . Actum erat de fæcundissima gente si libera fuisset; pudebat sterilitatis insolitæ . . . cum pariter a te necessitatibus ejus pudorique subventum est."

equality. *This is no lord*, exclaimed Martial; *this is an emperor, and the most just of senators.—You command us to be free*, adds Pliny, *we will be free.*[1]

Measures for maintaining the dignity of the senate.

He studied to enhance their self-respect, by scrupulously abstaining from dictating their election to offices. If ever he presumed to solicit their suffrages in favour of a friend, his obsequious manner was felt as a compliment not less persuasive than a command. Did this unaccustomed freedom of election increase the ardour of competition, he provided against its abuse by fresh enactments against bribery; he protected the true dignity of the fathers, by revoking the indulgence formerly allowed of voting by secret ballot.[2] The well-known passage in which Pliny hails the return of the golden age of publicity, is a valuable testimony to the gentlemanlike spirit common, we may believe, to his class.

Trajan's courage and self-denial.

Trajan too had pledged himself never to take the life of a senator, and his courage was equal to such self-denial. Thus when he was privily informed that Licinius Sura, one of the most illustrious of the order, was conspiring against him, he replied by allowing Sura's surgeon to anoint his eyes, and employing his barber to shave him. *Had my friend conceived designs against me*, he said next day, *he might have had his wish yesterday.* But all those about him were not equally innocent. Calpurnius Crassus, the same whom Nerva had pardoned, laid a plan for assassinating him. Trajan, though he could not exonerate the culprit,

[1] Martial, x. 72.:

"Non est hic dominus sed imperator,
Sed justissimus omnium senator."

Pliny, *Paneg.* 56.: "Jubes esse liberos; erimus." In this speech Pliny repeatedly contrasts the titles of "dominus" and "princeps." When, in his letters from Bithynia, he addresses Trajan as "dominus," he speaks as a military officer to his chief. But the word was already used as a courteous salutation to a superior.

[2] Plin. *Epist.* vi. 19., iii. 20.

disdained to take congnisance of the crime, and left to the senate the inquiry and the sentence. Thus it was that Crassus suffered death at the hands of his own colleagues, who accepted the responsibility of an act which seemed necessary for their hero's safety.[1]

Trajan's jealousy of guilds and trade combinations.

If the nobles enjoyed under Trajan all the liberty they desired, and at least as much as they could use to general advantage, they were gratified, moreover, by the jealousy with which their ruler controlled the classes beneath them. The privileged orders at Rome, as elsewhere, regarded with apprehension the power of combination possessed by the traders, the artisans, the shopkeepers of the city, whose more active cupidity was always accumulating wealth, and whose ambition prompted them to tread too closely on the heels of their proud and listless superiors. Hence the anxiety of the senate and magistrates, even under the free state, to repress the union of the lower classes, whether in the shape of guilds, of clubs or of any other co-operative societies. The danger was really a social one; but it was the policy of the government to represent it as political; and the shrewdest of the emperors now found it his interest to humour these apprehensions, and to affect a rooted antipathy to all social combinations. The political character he attributes to them appears in the word *factions*, by which he describes them. The horror Trajan affected, or really felt, in regard to them, extended into the provinces. When Pliny as prefect of Bithynia, proposed to enrol an association of workmen at Nicomedia for the speedier extinction of fires, he feels it necessary not only to consult the emperor on the subject, but to explain the precautions he

[1] Dion, lxviii. 15. Comp. Eutrop. viii. 2.: "Ut omni ejus ætate unus Senator damnatus sit, atque is tamen per Senatum ignorante Trajano."

would take to prevent abuse. Trajan absolutely rejects the proposal, declaring that no precautions can avail to prevent such associations degenerating into dangerous conspiracies.[1]

Trajan's administration combines splendour with economy.

But though Trajan's mind did not rise to wide and liberal views for the advantage of the provinces, he neglected no favourable opportunity for the benefit of particular localities. His ears were always open to the suggestions of his prefects, and the petitions of his subjects. His hand was open to bestow endowments and largesses, to relieve public calamities, to increase public enjoyments, to repair the ravages of earthquakes and tempests, to construct roads and canals, theatres and aqueducts. The activity displayed throughout the empire in works of this unproductive nature, shows a great command of money, an abundant currency, easy means of transacting business, ample resources of labour, and well-devised schemes for combining and unfolding them. Throughout a reign of nineteen years Trajan was enabled to abstain from any new and oppressive taxation, while he refrained, with scrupulous good faith, from the alternative of confiscation and proscription. He was ashamed of his predecessors' accumulations, of their houses and estates, their ornaments and furniture, extorted from the fears of their miserable subjects, offered during life as bribes for their favour, or servilely bequeathed on deathbeds. He made a noble sacrifice of these ill-gotten riches, either casting them to his friends, or devoting the produce of their sale to works of utility and grandeur.[2] Under Trajan's admirable

[1] Plin. *Epist.* x. 35, 36.: "Quodcunque nomen ex quacunque causa dederimus iis, qui in idem contracti fuerint, hetæriæ, quamvis breves, fient." He goes on to recommend the householders to provide means for their own protection against fire, "ac, si res poposcerit, accursu populi ad hoc uti."

[2] Plin. *Paneg.* 50, 51. This writer is extravagant in his encomiums on the alleviation by Trajan of the legacy duty (vicesima hæreditatum)

administration judicious economy went ever hand in hand with genuine magnificence.

The monuments of Roman jurisprudence contain many examples of Trajan's legislation. The *Replies* he addressed to the unceasing questions of his prefects and magistrates, were incorporated in the laws of the empire, and retained their force for many generations. The subjects, however, to which they relate are of minor interest, and illustrate no general principle to recommend them to the notice of historical students.[1] The legislator qualified himself for the task of propounding or applying legal principles, by assiduous labour in the administration of existing law. Trajan exchanged the toils of war for the labours of the forum. Like the great statesmen of the republic, he returned from the camp to the city to take his seat daily on the tribunals, with the ablest judges for his assessors; he heard appeals from the highest courts throughout his dominions, and the final sentence he pronounced assumed the validity of a legal enactment. The clemency of Trajan was as conspicuous as his love of justice, and to him is ascribed the noble sentiment that it is better that the guilty should escape than the innocent suffer.[2] It was also a refinement in flattery, not uncommonly adopted, to request the emperor to undertake the hearing in the first instance. Such was the case with the three trials which Pliny describes in one of his letters, when Trajan summoned him to his

Trajan's legislation.

paid by Roman citizens. The class that profited by it was small, but they were Roman citizens, and the remission was made by the fisc. Plin. *Paneg.* 37.

[1] See the enumeration of Senatusconsulta, edicts, rescripts, &c. of Trajan from the *Digest* and other sources in Francke's careful work. Such as related to questions between patrons and clients or freedmen seem to have been conceived in the interests of the former class. Comp. Plin. *Ep.* x. 4.; Martial, x. 34.

[2] *Digest.* xlviii. 19. 5.: "Satius esse impunitum relinqui facinus nocentis quam innocentem damnare."

residence at Centumcellæ. *What more delightful,* he exclaims, *than to witness the prince's justice, gravity and courtesy, even in his private retirement, where his virtues are most plainly discovered?* The first was the case of Claudius Aristo, a provincial magnate, who pleaded his own cause triumphantly against a calumnious imputation of treason. The second was a charge of adultery committed with a centurion by the wife of a military tribune. The husband had laid his grievance before the legatus, but the provincial magistrate had referred it to the imperator, as a matter of camp discipline, and Trajan took care, in giving judgment, to let it be understood that it was only as between soldiers that he took cognisance of it. The third was a complaint of the presumptive heirs to a property against the claimants under the will. They had addressed themselves to the emperor while he was absent in Dacia, and he appointed a day for the hearing on his return. One of the defendants was a freedman of the imperial household, and when the plaintiffs, who apparently had no real case, pretended that they dared not enforce their claim against a favourite of the emperor's, Trajan magnanimously replied, that Eurhythmus was not a Polycletus, nor was he a Nero.[1] It is clear that, whatever might be the legitimate mode of procedure, the first of these cases was referred to the emperor as a matter specially affecting his prerogative as chief of the state; the second, as has been said, because it related to the discipline of the army; and the third, from the peculiar claims which a freedman of the palace might be supposed to have on the prince's interest.

The justice, the modesty, the unwearied application of Trajan, were deservedly celebrated, no less than his valour in war, and his conduct in political affairs,

[1] Plin. *Epist.* vi. 31.

but a great part of his amazing popularity was owing, no doubt, to his genial demeanour, and to the affection inspired by his qualities as a friend and associate. The importance which the Romans attached to the personal character of their eminent men, has generally filled their biographies with anecdotes of their private life. The prominence given by the establishment of monarchy to the man who occupied the highest place among them, brought this tendency into still stronger relief. It is to be regretted, however, that with the exception of his next predecessor, Trajan is the only emperor of whom there survives no such special monograph. Our account of his exploits, his fortune and his character, must be taken from the epitome of Dion's slight history, or pieced imperfectly together, from the *Panegyric* of Pliny, and the surer, but still more meagre evidence of coins and monuments. The trifling notices in the compendious works of Victor or Eutropius may confirm what we have gleaned from these sources, but hardly add another fact to it. Nevertheless, Trajan possesses an advantage over the other emperors, in the remains still existing of his correspondence in the letters of Pliny, which bring out not only the manners of the times, but in some degree the character of the prince also, and bear ample testimony to his minute vigilance and unwearied application, his anxiety for his subjects' well-being, the ease with which he conducted his intercourse with his friends, and the ease with which he inspired them in return.[1] Trajans' letters bespeak

Trajan's personal qualities.

[1] We are struck in perusing this correspondence with the apparent absence it betrays of general principles of government. In every emergency the prefect puts a direct question to the emperor. The emperor replies with a special answer. The brevity, point, and vigour of his replies bespeak his sense and judgment. The last letter of the series, in which he grants a favour to his correspondent, is a graceful instance of his courtesy as well as his kindness.

the polished gentleman no less than the statesman. Such too is the common tenour of all our evidence on this head. Trajan was fond of society, and of educated and even literary society. He was proud of being known to associate with the learned, and felt himself complimented when he bestowed on the rhetorician Dion the compliment of carrying him in his own chariot.[1] That such refinement of taste was not incompatible with excess in the indulgences of the table, was the fault of the times, and more particularly, perhaps, of the habits of camp life, to which he had been so much accustomed. Intemperance was always a Roman vice, and though Augustus might be remarkable for his sobriety, it would be wrong to infer from the examples of Nerva, Trajan, and his next successor, Hadrian, that the leaders of society at Rome had degenerated in the second century from those of the first, and of ages still earlier. Sulla and Cato the Censor, Julius Cæsar and Antonius, were free livers in all respects, and only less notorious for their excesses at table than Tiberius and Claudius, inasmuch as the greatness of their general character overshadowed their littlenesses.[2]

Trajan's figure and countenance.

The affability of the prince, and the freedom with which he exchanged with his nobles all the offices of ordinary courtesy and hospitality, bathing, supping, or hunting as an equal in their company, constituted one of his greatest

[1] Philostr. *Vit. Sophist.* i. 7.: *τί μεν λέγεις οὐκ οἶδα, φιλῶ δέ ὡς ἐμαυτόν.* Comp. Themist. *Orat.* v. on the philosophers patronized by the emperors.

[2] For the evidence of Trajan's intemperance see Dion, lxviii. 7.; Victor, *Cæs.* 13., *Epit.* 13, 48.; Spartian. *Hadr.* 3.; Lamprid. *Alex. Sev.* 39.; Julian. *Cæsar*, p. 23.; and comp. Francke, *Gesch. Trajans*, p. 664.: "Wie an Philipp von Macedonien und seinem Adel, an Alexander M. und seiner Generalen, die Uebertreibung des Genusses bei Bacchanalien gerugt wird, soll Trajan, wie Nerva, Hadrian und andere Zeitgenossen, einen fröhlichen Trunk geliebt haben." The

charms in the eyes of a jealous patriciate which had seen its masters too often engrossed by the flatteries of freedmen, and still viler associates. But Trajan enjoyed also the distinction, dear in Roman eyes, of a fine figure and a noble countenance. In stature he exceeded the common height, and on public occasions, when he loved to walk bareheaded in the midst of the senators, his grey hairs gleamed conspicuously above the crowd. His features, as we may trace them unmistakeably on his innumerable busts and medals, were regular, and his face was the last of the imperial series that retained the true Roman type, not in the aquiline nose only, but in the broad and low forehead, the angular chin, the firm compressed lips, and generally in the stern compactness of its structure.[1] The thick and straight-cut hair, smoothed over the brow without a curl or a parting, marks the simplicity of the man's character in a voluptuous age which delighted in the culture of flowing or frizzled locks. But the most interesting characteristic of the figure I have so vividly before me, is the look of painful thought, which seems to indicate a constant sense of overwhelming responsibilities, honourably felt and bravely borne, yet, notwithstanding much assumed cheerfulness and self-abandonment, ever irritating the nerves and weighing upon the conscience.

habits of Philip and Alexander were those of semi-barbarians contrasted with the polished self-restraint of the Greeks, but the Romans had never adopted the Grecian polish in this particular.

[1] Winckelmann has observed that generally in the busts of Roman emperors the lips are closed, indicating peculiar reserve and dignity, free from human passions and emotions. A similar feeling may be traced in the earliest Greek statues, but it was not retained even by the Greeks in their representation of divinities. So a statue of Apollo is described by Propertius (ii. 23.):

"Hic equidem Phœbo visus mihi pulchrior ipso
Marmoreus tacita carmen *hiare* lyra."

The history of Trajan's reign is now brought down to the moment of his last departure from the city. A short interval of Eastern warfare still remains between this epoch and his death; but the incidents of his latter years belong to another connexion of events, and it will be convenient here to close the summary of his conduct and character.

CHAPTER LXIV.

Effect of the Flavian reaction on Roman literature.—Comparison of Lucan and Silius Italicus· of Seneca and Quintilian.—Pliny the naturalist.—Scholastic training.—Juvenal compared with Persius: Statius with Ovid: Martial with Horace.—The historians: Tacitus: ingenuity of his plan.—His prejudices and misrepresentations.—Prevalence of biography.—Tacitus and Suetonius.—Uncritical spirit of historical composition.—Memoirs and correspondence.—Pliny the younger.—Interest attaching to his letters.—Mutual approximation of the philosophical sects.—Prevalence of suicide.—Corellius.—Silius.—Arria.—Corruption of society.—Military manners.—Life among the intelligent nobles.—Spurinna.—Pliny the elder.—Pliny the younger.—Villas of the nobility.—The Laurentine and Tuscan of Pliny.—The Surrentine of Pollius.—Decline of masculine character among the Romans.—Exceptions.—Tacitus and Juvenal masculine writers.—Contrast in their tempers.—Last champions of Roman ideas.

Moral aspect of the Flavian reaction.

OUR latest chapters have supplied a narrative of political events, illustrated by personal anecdotes, and by such accounts of the monuments of the age as might serve to animate and explain it. We may now, in turn, devote a special section to the moral aspect of Roman society during the period thus reviewed, the reigns, namely, of Vespasian and his two sons, of Nerva and of Trajan; and, in so doing, we must observe again how strongly the Flavian period is marked by the reaction from the spirit of the Claudian empire. The establishment of the monarchy had kindled, as we have seen, the imagination of the Romans. Hard, selfish, prosaic as they naturally were, they had been roused to enthusiasm by the greatness of Julius, the fortune of Augustus, the wild magnificence of Caius, the grace and accomplishments of Nero. In their fond admiration of the glorious objects thus presented to them,

they had invested the men themselves with the attributes of divinity, their government with a halo of immortality. They were persuaded that the empire itself, under the rule of this celestial dynasty, was an effluence from the divine regimen of the world; and they consented to regard the freaks of caprice and madness from which, as from the disturbances of the elements, they occasionally suffered, as mysterious but perhaps necessary evils.[1] Meanwhile they revelled without stint or misgiving in luxury, extravagance, and every vicious indulgence. No shade of apprehension for the future had yet passed over the festivals and orgies in which wealth and greatness rioted among them. The eternity of Rome, and the immutability of her fortunes, were supposed to be established in the decrees of fate. Her universal empire was the theme of poets and declaimers; and the idea that the Latian Jupiter was the lord of all the world, which he held as it were in trust for the children of Romulus, was impressed without doubt or question on the minds of her exulting citizens.

Extinction of the Cæsarean enthusiasm.

The monstrous follies of Nero's latter years had, doubtless, more effect in unsealing men's eyes than his cruelties or extortions. His dancing and singing revolted their prejudices more than his proscriptions and confiscations. Their god had at last made himself contemptible, and the petulance which rebuked the worshippers of leeks and crocodiles in Egypt, was startled in its turn by the vileness of the human idol which it condescended itself to worship. Nevertheless, in the absence of any foreign opinion which could act upon the sentiments of the Romans, it might have been

[1] Lucan, *Pharsal.* i. 37.: "Scelera ipsa nefasque Hac mercede placent." The Romans had doubtless applied to their own case the same reasoning which they addressed to their subjects: "Quomodo sterilitatem aut nimios imbres, et cætera naturæ mala, ita luxum vel avaritiam dominantium tolerate." Tac. *Hist.* iv. 74.

long before this surprise or shame was roused to action. Even Nero's frivolities would never, perhaps, have been resented in arms by the senate, nor by the classes whose feelings the senate represented, had not the blow been first struck from the camps in the provinces, within which all the vigour, and most of the prejudices, of old Rome had taken refuge. The conviction which flashed upon the world from Galba's Spanish leaguer, that a prince could be created elsewhere than at Rome, was in itself a revolution. The ripening tradition of a hundred years was in an instant blighted. The quick succession of pretenders each clothing himself for a moment in the purple, and passing swiftly across the stage, dissipated what remained of the Cæsarean enthusiasm. Vespasian succeeded to a realm weary of illusion and disposed to obedience.

Effect of this reaction on the tone of Roman literature.

The blindness of this obedience may be estimated from the ease with which men conformed to the example of their new ruler's antique and homely character. The solid virtues of the founder of the Flavian dynasty exposed more strongly than ever the tinsel brilliancy of Nero. The sobered feeling of the age is vividly impressed on the remains of its literature. The writings of the Flavian period present little of the lawless force and feverish extravagance which so generally mark the Claudian. The enthusiasm of the Romans had been quelled. Their compositions are now subjected to more careful revision; they aim at exactness and completeness; they study artistic development. They exhibit the results of a conscious self-command, and already betray the effects of the new system of academic training disseminated through the schools by Vespasian. The contrast between the style of the two eras, so little removed in time, but so widely separated in ideas and sentiments, may be illustrated

Comparison of Claudian and Flavian writers.

by a comparison of parallel writers. Thus, for instance, we may set Lucan side by side with Silius Italicus. Both were men of affluence and noble birth; both well versed in the liberal knowledge of their time; both familiar with the court, the one with that of Nero, the other with that of the Flavian emperors, and with the high-bred society that flitted through it. The death of the one was precipitated by his own uncontrolled but generous impetuosity, while Silius cultivated patience under the sway of emperors bad and good indifferently, lived in safety to a ripe old age, in the enjoyment of every civil honour, and at last perished by his own act and will, when sated with life, and harassed by an incurable malady, he resolved to finish his career by abstinence, and resisted the dissuasions of his friends through the long-protracted agony of a theatrical exit.[1] Both devoted themselves to poetical composition, and exulted in the applause of their contemporaries not less than in the hopes of an enduring reputation.[2] They shared a kindred taste, also, in their choice of themes; for both made the rare selection of a national event for the subject of an epic, and both entered on their tasks in the spirit of rhetoricians rather than of poets. But their mode of execution was widely different. Lucan, with less imagination and less invention than any one perhaps of the great masters of epic song, is the most independent and self-sufficing of them all. He displays

Lucan and Silius Italicus.

[1] Silius was actually a little the elder of the two; but Lucan died A.D. 65 at the age of twenty-six, Silius was living nearly forty years later, and composed his poem under Domitian, at least twenty years after the date of the *Pharsalia*.

[2] The contemporary reputation enjoyed by Lucan is shown by the well-known line of Juvenal, *Sat.* vii. 79.: "Contentus fama jaceat Lucanis in hortis Marmoreis." The estimation in which Silius was held, may be judged from several compliments paid him by Martial and Pliny.

throughout a daring disregard for precedent and authority. He venerates no master; he follows no model; he had never studied, one is almost tempted to imagine that he had never read, Virgil. He seems hardly to look forward from one of his cantos to another, exhibits no unity of purpose, sets forth no moral, proposes to us no hero. Nevertheless, in spite of this defiance of all rules and traditions, he succeeds, by the mere force of vehemence and audacity, in persuading us to admit him within the hallowed circle of the master spirits of poetry. Silius, on the contrary, creeps, while Lucan bounds, and almost flies. Silius writes with all the principles of art in his head, and all the works of the great models ranged in order round his desk. His tropes and similes seem to be selected from a common-place book, and he seldom ventures to describe a striking incident, without invoking the rhythm and diction of the singer of the Æneid.[1] But even the sustained and agreeable correctness of his fifteen thousand verses almost deserves our admiration, and we feel that such a poem could hardly have inherited the immortality which is so large a share of fame, had not its editors, its transcribers, and its readers, regarded it, in some sense, as the representative of an epoch, and important for its just conception.[2] For Silius does, in fact, represent to us the refined, the highly instructed, the now tamed and sobered patrician of the Flavian era, to whom the early history of his countrymen was a fit subject for ideal description, but bore no practical reference to the circumstances around him.

[1] Pliny's criticism on Silius Italicus, "Scribebat carmina majore cura quam ingenio" (*Epist.* iii. 7.), may be taken as a motto for the literary character of the age.

[2] It should be observed, however, that the poem of Silius Italicus seems to have been long lost to the ancients, who never quote it, and which was first made known to us by the accidental discovery of a single manuscript in the fifteenth century. Bähr, *Gesch. der Römisch. Literatur*, i. 256.

In his mind politics are a mere blank. He neither reflects on the present, nor regrets the past. To him the warriors of the old republic are no longer the men of the forum and the capitol, such as he sees before his own eyes: they have passed into the twilight of myths and demigods. To him Scipio is a second Hercules, the achiever of labours, the tamer of monsters, the umpire of the divinities of Pleasure and Virtue. Hannibal is an ogre or giant of romance, who seems to vanish at the catastrophe of the story in a tempest of flame or cloud.[1] But the listless complacence with which such a poem as the *Punica* must have been written and perused, and the faint applause its recital must have elicited, plainly reveal to us the spirit of moderation and mediocrity which had succeeded, in the high places of Roman society, to the whirlwinds of passion and licentiousness.

Seneca and Quintilian.

A similar comparison may be instituted between the two most eminent prose writers of these periods, Seneca and Quintilian. There is a striking correspondence between these celebrated men in many particulars. Both were Spaniards by origin, and were bred, we may suppose, in the same school of florid rhetoric, which was supposed to impart a peculiar flavour to all their countrymen's compositions. Each was attached to the imperial court of his own era; for Quintilian, after a first transient visit to Rome, is said to have come over from Spain in the train of Galba, and became, in course of time, the favoured tutor of Domitian's nephews. Both were raised from moderate station to high official rank and distinction. As regards the natural bias of their genius, both devoted themselves with enthusiasm to the instruction of their age, and became teachers,

[1] Sil. Ital. xv. 20. foll., xvii. 614.:

"Mihi satque superque
Ut me Dardaniæ matres, atque Itala tellus,
Dum vivam, exspectent, nec pacem pectore norint."

or rather preachers, of the doctrines which lay nearest to their hearts. If philosophy was the religion of Seneca, the rights and duties of the true orator were held in no less sacred estimation by Quintilian, and the author of the well-known *Institution of a Speaker* believed that he was training his pupil in the path of virtue, while equipping him for a public career.[1] But with these points of analogy between them, no two masters of Latin speech stand in more marked contrast to one another in all that regards the acquired qualities of taste and judgment. In his stilted truisms or transparent paradoxes Seneca represents an age of overweening presumption and pretence, while the sound sense of Quintilian has been justly admired by all sober critics. Following in the wake of a period abandoned to the false glitter of rhetorical fancy, Quintilian sets himself, with unerring instinct, to correct the prevailing theories of rhetorical composition, and restore the true standard of taste. His judgment is independent and original. Opposed as he is to the errors of his time, he does not rush back precipitately to an earlier and purer age for his models. He knows of no perfect age of oratory, no absolute example of eloquence. His mind is open to excellence in any quarter, and he can see blemishes in every school, and in every master of the art. None perhaps of his critical canons would be questioned in the most enlightened age of rhetorical criticism; nor do we now dispute the justice of any sentence pronounced from his tribunal on the heroes of ancient literature. If, indeed, as he says himself of oratory, the student who admires Cicero has already advanced far in the art of which Cicero was so noble an ornament, so we may affirm, that to appreciate Quintilian's

[1] This feeling may be traced almost throughout Quintilian's work; but it is distinctly expressed in the preface: "Oratorem autem instituimus illum perfectum, qui esse nisi vir bonus non potest." . . . "sit orator vir talis, qui vere sapiens appellari potest."

judgments is to have mastered the theory of literary composition.[1] It would have been impossible for the age of Claudius and Nero to have produced a work so tolerant, so temperate, so sage as the *Institution*, and we must acknowledge the significance of the revolution it denotes in the taste and feeling of the people.

Pliny the naturalist.

It may be presumed that Quintilian represents a class of contemporary critics, and that his careful discrimination of the rules of composition was strictly in the fashion of his day. But we know individuals only, and we can only compare together individual examples. The scentific method of the Romans in the department of literary criticism, exemplified in this grammarian, contrasts widely with their vague empiricism in natural philosophy, as reflected in the work of the elder Pliny. In point of time, indeed Pliny may be claimed for either of the generations we are now considering; and the contrast before us is not so much of two successive epochs, as of ordinary training in two several branches of knowledge. It is only to the moral sciences indeed, as taught among the Romans, that the term *training* can be fairly applied. In natural philosophy they were left to pick up knowledge by desultory reading, or casual observation, without system or analytic instruction of any kind. Even the extensive professoriate of the Flavian and later emperors comprised no chairs for the teaching of mathematics, astronomy, geography, or any branch of natural history. The crude and unwieldy encyclopædia of the *Natural History* has been preserved, in all probability, by its being the only great repertory of facts of the kind to which the inquirers of Western Europe in the Middle Ages could refer; and this happy accident has revealed to us the remarkable deficiency of

[1] Quintil. *Inst.* x. i. 112.: "Ille se profecisse sciat cui Cicero valde placebit." Comp. § 125., his unfavourable judgment of Seneca.

Roman civilization in this particular. Amassed from a boundless variety of sources, and from writers, both Greek and Latin, of every degree of credit, the data presented by Pliny embrace a wonderful amount of correct observation and true tradition; but the assiduous collector seems to have exercised little judgment, and depending almost wholly on books, made a very imperfect use of his own eyes and experience. He cares not to discriminate between his authorities; he does not compare, digest, select and reject; he simply accumulates, till his judgment becomes paralysed, as it were, by the weight imposed upon it. Oppressed with the immensity and multiformity of Nature, the stores of which are thus unrolled in a confused and shifting scroll before him, Pliny does not demand a Purpose and a Providence to maintain the harmony which he fails to appreciate; he denies the existence of the law which he cannot perceive, and, in the craven spirit of his age, takes refuge in the shadowy dream-land of Pantheism from the perplexity in which his own empiricism involves him. The works of Nature are to him Nature itself, and Nature itself is the God of Nature.[1]

It would seem that the establishment of the professorial system throughout the empire by Vespa-

[1] Plin. *Hist. Nat.* ii. 1. foll.: "Mundum . . . . numen esse credi par est, æternum, immensum, neque genitum neque interiturum unquam. . . . . Idem rerum naturæ opus, et rerum ipsa natura. . . . Solem mundi esse totius animum ac planius mentem; hunc principale naturæ regimen ac numen credere licet. . . . Quisquis est Deus, si modo est alius, et quacunque in parte, totus est sensus, totus visus, totus auditus, totus animi, totus sui. . . . . Deus est mortali juvare mortalem, etc. . . . Invenit tamen . . . sibi ipsa mortalitas numen, quominus etiam plana de Deo conjectatio esset. Toto quippe mundo et locis omnibus, omnibusque horis omnium vocibus Fortuna sola invocatur. . . . Pars alia et hanc pellit, astroque suo eventus assignat, nascendi legibus. . . . . Sedere cœpit sententia hæc, pariterque et eruditum vulgus et rude in eam cursu vadit. . . . Imperfectæ vero in homine naturæ præcipua solatia ne Deum quidem posse omnia. . . . per quæ declaratur haud dubie *naturæ potentia*, idque esse quod Deum vocamus."

sian, further amplified by his successors, helped to unfold the characteristics we remark in the mind and literature of the age before us.

The poets of scholastic training.

The compositions of the Flavian era, it will be readily allowed, are impressed with the features of accuracy and finish, and may be advantageously compared, in this respect, with the loose and somewhat aimless style of the writers of the age preceding, who had been trained by the declaimers only. Silius, Statius, and Valerius Flaccus are poets of the School and the Academy. They have imbibed the lessons of conventional criticism under methodical and sensible teachers, men of Quintilian's stamp; and they have sought and won, after many essays, the prizes of Alba and the Capitol. The satires of Juvenal are more definite in their scope than those of Persius. There is no vagueness of aim, no mistiness of language, about the Flavian moralist, the Academic professor of virtue. The crimes and vices he denounces are pilloried in the public eye; every line as it speeds along, flings its dart of contumely upon them; and we rise from perusing any one of his pieces (except the Sixteenth, which is probably, and the Fifteenth, which is possibly not his own) with the feeling that there is not a verse deficient nor a verse redundant, throughout it.

Juvenal compared with Persius.

For the defects of Persius, youth may be pleaded in excuse: such, however, as we have received them, his poems want this steadiness of aim; and we often pause in reading them to hesitate and reflect, and after all to little purpose, in order to grasp his object. The satires of Persius are the natural product of an age which advanced words above things, and urged the writer to seek a momentary triumph for a smart or sounding phrase, rather than give lasting satisfaction to his readers by the interest of a sustained argument.

Another star in the Flavian constellation, another

product of the same era, is the brilliant poet Statius. The Academic literature of Rome was a refined adaptation of the style first created at Alexandria by the lecturers of the Museum under the sunshine of court patronage. Antimachus, whose poem on the war of Thebes is said to have been the model of the epic of Statius, was a forerunner of the Alexandrian school; but, in taking for his guide this ancient master, the accomplished Roman allowed himself some licence, and studied superior refinement. The chief points indeed of incident and character in a theme so trite had become arbitrarily fixed, and the Flavian critics would hardly suffer a new competitor for the prize of excellence to depart widely from his formula. Amidst all the licentiousness of prevailing unbelief, the mytholgy of the poets was as much a matter of conventional treatment as the sacred painting of the Middle Ages; and we must bear in mind, that much in their mode of treatment which seems to us vapid and jejune, appeared far otherwise to a generation which saw it in the light of an established tradition. As regards his subject, Statius walks in fetters: he could not create or innovate. Nevertheless, there is, perhaps, no ancient epic so perfect in form and argument as the Thebaid. Its story is the most compact of all; its incidents and characters, however palely delineated, are not less various in proportion to its length than those of the Iliad; its unity is undoubtedly more complete. If it wants the central figure which predominates over the vicissitudes of the Æneid, it presents us instead with a grand procession of Seven Heroes of equal fame and prowess, in all the sevenfold blaze of their legendary glory. But the versifier of a cultivated age and a refined society cannot impart a sustained and lofty interest to a story purely mythological; and the contemporaries of Statius felt, we may believe, as much as modern

Statius compared with Ovid.

readers, that it was not for the story that his poem was to be studied. The merits of this admirable poet are such as detract from, rather than enhance, the proper charm of epic song. Statius is a miniature-painter, employed by the freak of a patron or from some peculiar misapprehension of his own powers, on the production of a great historic picture. Every part, every line, every shade is touched and re-touched; approach the canvas and examine it with glasses, every thread and hair has evidently received the utmost care, and taken the last polish; but, step backwards, and embrace the whole composition in one gaze, and the general effect is confused from want of breadth and largeness of treatment.

The Thebaid was recited, we may believe, in portions to connoisseurs and critics, and the author was doubtless misled by the applause which naturally was excited by the exquisite finish of successive periods. A genteel mob assembled on the day of each promised performance, and the youth of Italy carried off the fragments in their memory, and repeated them to the admiring circles of their acquaintance.[1] Assuredly their judgment would have been modified, had they stayed to view the composition in its full proportions; and the author himself would have done more justice to his powers, could he have renounced the insidious flatteries of his age, and written in patience and solitude for immortality.[2] The genius

[1] Juvenal, vii. 82.:

"Curritur ad vocem jucundam et carmen amicæ
Thebaidos, lætam fecit cum Statius urbem
Promisitque diem."

Compare the author's self-congratulations. *Theb.* xii. in fin.:

"Itala jam studio discit memoratque juventus."

[2] Thus the outline of the description of the death of Amphiaraus (*Theb.* vii. 690–823.), relieved from many tinsel ornaments and laboured effects, is one of the noblest flights of poetry; and the discovery of Achilles among the daughters of Lycomedes (*Achill.* ii.

of Statius may bear comparison in some respects with that of Ovid, while the contrast which strikes us at once in the perusal of their works is just such as would result from the different character of their times. The author of the Thebaid, the Achilleid, and the Sylvæ is hardly inferior in readiness and fertility to the distinguished singer of the Metamorphoses, the Heroides. and the Art of Love. But while the earlier writer is suffered by the taste of his era to riot in the wanton indulgence of his humour, and let his fancy rove with loose untrammelled graces, the latter is subjected to strict curb and rein, his paces are those of the manège, not of nature; all is art, all is discipline and training; every effect is exquisite in itself, but the effort is too apparent in the author, and the strain on the mind of the reader too fatiguing. Ovid lost half his strength by his licentious exuberance; Statius deprives himself of his real vigour by swathing his own limbs in bandages. A true instinct is charmed neither by the splay foot of the mountain peasant girl, nor by the tortured limb of the Chinese lady of fashion.

Martial compared with Horace.

Almost every group of three or four lines in Statius constitutes in itself an idea, perhaps a conceit, a play of thought or of words; it fastens itself like a burr on the memory: such is the distinctness of his vision, such the elaborate accuracy of his touch. The epigram is the crowning result of this elaborate terseness of diction, and this lucid perception of the aim in view. The verses of

200.), though a little overlaid with words, is instinct with genuine imagination:

. . . "cum grande tuba, sic jussus, Agyrtes
Insonuit . . . .
Illius *intactæ* cecidere a pectore vestes:
Jam clypeus, breviorque *manu consumitur hasta*;
Mira fides, Ithacumque humeris *excedere visus*,
Ætolumque ducem: tantum subita arma calorque
Martius *horrenda confundit luce* Penates . . . ."

Martial are the quintessence of the Flavian poetry. The fine point to which he sharpens his conceptions is the last triumph of that verbal exactness and mechanical ingenuity to which we pay a tribute of hardly less admiration in Statius and Valerius Flaccus. The *careful felicity* of Horace is reproduced in Martial under the form which most aptly befits the later age in which he flourished. The lyrics of the Augustan period are characteristically represented by the epigrams of the Flavian. The style of Martial has indeed this advantage over that of Horace, that he goes always straight to his point, and there can be no misconception of his drift; while Horace seems sometimes to wander from his purpose, to lose himself and leave hold, at least for a moment, of his subject. There are several of the Odes the exact scope of which the critics cannot ascertain; the leading idea is sometimes lost at the outset and unrecovered to the end.[1] As regards this uncertainty of aim, the Eclogues even of the correct and self-possessed Virgil may be contrasted with the Sylvæ of Statius. Among the thirty poems of this Flavian collection, there is none about the scope and meaning of which there can be any question; none in which the leading idea is lost or overlaid by thick springing fancies; while more than one of the Eclogues remains to this day an insoluble problem to the interpreters.[2] This again may be noted as a direct result of the systematic education, the academic or professorial training, of the Flavian period.

In the department of poetical composition this

[1] Thus we must look for the help of allegory to explain *Od.* i. 14, 15., iii. 4. In iii. 2, 3, 27 and others—"fertur equis auriga"—the poet seems to lose his command of Pegasus. This carelessness is possibly studied and may perhaps be effective according to the proper idea of dithyrambics; but it is worth while to contrast it with the neatness and precise execution of Statius or Martial.

[2] Such, for instance, are the first, the fourth, and the eighth eclogue.

precision of aim and studied completeness of execution tend to prosaic and positive results. They lead the mind to dwell on material objects, as the most proper for accurate delineation. Hence the poetry of the Flavian age is generally limited in its range, and refers mostly to the material elements of the civilization which lies within the immediate scope of its vision. If it ventures to unfold to an unbelieving age the mystic law of ancient supernaturalism, it invests traditions and legends with the hard colouring of modern actuality. The nymphs and heroes of Statius seem copied from the courtiers of the Palatine; the Medea of Valerius Flaccus is a virago of the imperial type, a Lollia or an Agrippina. In history, however, which, at the period now before us, has outstripped poetry in interest and value, the tendencies of the age produce new and important consequences. An age of positive thought develops legitimate history. The historian of the Flavian era is no longer a chronicler or a romancer. He may seek perhaps to mould the truth to his own prejudices; but he is not a mere artist, indifferent to truth altogether. He is a philosopher, and recognises a mission. He has his own theories of society and politics; the events of the period before him group themselves in his mind in certain natural combinations, according to the leading idea to which they are subordinated. If he is a man of imagination, he paints the world from the type impressed on his own organs of vision. Whether or not the facts be correctly represented, they are at least true to him; he describes what he sees, or really fancies that he sees. Works that bear this stamp of imagination are immortal. Their details may be inexact; the genius by which they are produced may be uncritical; but their general effect is strong and vivid, and they leave a mark behind them which cannot be effaced. Appian traces the annals of man-

The historians of the Flavian age.

kind along the lines by which the various races and countries are politically connected with Rome. In Plutarch's mind, on the contrary, history is the painting of individual character. Each writer works out his own conception in wide contrast with the other; but each collects and marshals his facts with the sole object of illustrating it.

Appian and Plutarch.

Livy, indeed, the great historian of the Augustan age, writes with a strong and vivid perception of the scenes and incidents he describes. The men whose portraits decorate the long galleries through which he roams, have a distinct form and character in his mind, and he paints truly from the lineaments before him. But Livy's was not an age of speculation. He had no doctrine in history or politics, beyond a vague conviction of the greatness and invincibility of Rome, and an assurance of her triumphant destiny. Very different is the case with Livy's great rival, Tacitus. The subtler genius of the later period is reflected on the pages of this philosophic theorist, who constructs the history of the empire with reference to a dominant idea in his own mind. The object of Tacitus, conceived in the patrician school to which he had attached himself, is to show that the supremacy of Rome, the final cause of her existence, depends on the pre-eminence of an oligarchy, with which all her glories and successes are closely entwined. He regards the downfall of this caste under the Cæsarean usurpation as the fruitful source of the degradations and miseries by which her later career has been sullied. The empire has been disgraced by tyranny, by profligacy, and base compliances at home; by defeats and humiliations abroad. The free spirit of the Optimate has been repressed, and he has been constrained to cringe, and flatter, not patricians only of equal nobility with his own, but the meaner offspring of the lesser houses; not new men only, and unennobled Romans, but even

Tacitus compared with Livy.

upstart foreigners and enfranchised bondmen. Great national disasters have indicated, in rapid succession, the disgust of the gods at the degeneracy of their chosen favourites, at the contempt into which their own altars have fallen, and the blasphemy by which divine honour have been extended to the vilest of mortals. The spirit and idea of Tacitus's history is closely represented in the kindred epic of Lucan, which only expresses more bluntly and without even the pretence of historic impartiality, as was natural in a youth and a poet, the feeling of indignant dissatisfaction common to both. But Tacitus, mature in years and cool in temper, used more discretion in the handling of his theory than the reckless declaimer of five-and-twenty. The plan of Lucan's poem entangles him in the causes of the revolution which they deplore and denounce in common; and we learn from some of the wisest as well as the most eloquent verses in the *Pharsalia* that the revolution, even in the eyes of an aristocrat, was unavoidable; that it was produced by the crimes and excesses of that very period of aristocratic domination to which both look back with equal regret; that the Roman oligarchy fell by its own vices, vices inherent in its political constitution, as well as by the strong rebound of its own victories and triumphs.[1] We perceive that its fall, once consummated, was final and irretrievable; that no honour or generosity in a Julius or an Augustus, no martial ardour in a Tiberius, no discretion in a Caius or a Claudius, no dignity in a Nero could have restored the vital glow of a divine inspiration which had fled for ever with the Scipios and the Gracchi.

Tacitus and Lucan.

It was, however, an error in Lucan thus to lift the veil from the licentiousness of the era he affected

[1] Lucan, *Pharsal.* i. 84–182.: "Tu causa malorum Facta tribus dominis communis Roma . . . . . . Et concussa fides et multis utile bellum."

to lament. Tacitus, with more skill and prudence, draws the eyes of his audience from it altogether. The historian commences his review of Roman affairs with the period which succeeds the revolution, after its first and immediate fruits have been reaped, and the benefits, undeniable as they were, which it in the first instance produced, had lost some of their original brightness in his countrymen's memory. The Cæsarean usurpation had run a course of sixty years—years of unexampled prosperity, as Tacitus must himself have acknowledged, had he set them fairly before his eyes—when he takes up the thread of events, and devotes the labour of his life to blazoning the disasters which have never ceased, as he pretends, to flow from it. He confines himself to the decline and fall of the system which had now indeed passed its brief and fallacious prime. He traces the failing fortunes of the republic from the defeat of Varus, and the gloom diffused over the city in the last days of Augustus by the anticipation of a younger tyranny, and closes his gloomy review with the fall of the last of the despots, the mean, the cruel, the jealous Domitian.[1] Thus he embraces precisely the whole period of disgrace and disaster by which the crimes of the Cæsars were chastised; nor will he mar the completeness of this picture by introducing into it the figures of those regenerators of the empire whom he himself lived afterwards to see, the record of whose virtue and fortune he reserves for the solace of his old age.[2] His narrative of the civil wars which followed the death of Nero, and of the three Flavian administrations, was the first written, under the name

Ingenuity of Tacitus in fixing the limits of his history.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* i. 1.: "Consilium mihi pauca de Augusto et extrema tradere, mox Tiberii principatum et cetera."

[2] Tac. *Hist.* i. 1.: "Quod si vita suppeditet principatum D. Nervæ et imperium Trajani, uberiorem securioremque materiam, senectuti seposui."

of *Histories;* while the account of the earlier period, known by the title of *Annals,* was produced subsequently. The work which treats of contemporary affairs is more full in detail than the other, but we may believe that the author regarded the two as a single whole; and it is possible that he may have contemplated them himself under a single title. The unity of their common design, as a lasting record of the Cæsarean revolution traced to its distant consequences, would have been marred by a glowing peroration on the fame and prosperity of Trajan; nor do we know that Tacitus ever actually accomplished the labour of love which he anticipated as his crowning work. Perhaps, after all, he felt that the senatorial government of his patron rested on no solid foundations, and shrank at the last moment from glorifying the merits of a constitution which depended on the moderation of its chief alone. Yet we should have valued as the noblest of legacies a temperate and candid disquisition, by one so acute and eloquent on the state of society which rendered Trajan's rule the best then possible, and made the existence of so much good so lamentably precarious.

Prepossession of Tacitus in favour of Trajan.

In the absence of legal checks on the caprice or tyranny of the ruler, the dagger of the assassin, or at best the revolt of the legions, had been the last hope and safeguard of the classes obnoxious to his jealousy. The moral we should be tempted, at first sight, to draw from the history of Tacitus, is that the moderation of the Flavian empire was produced at last by the repeated examples of successful intrigue against the bad emperors. But this would be a wrong conclusion. The moderation and justice of the virtuous princes, such as Vespasian and Trajan, was the effect of their personal character, combined with their fortunate circumstances. Vespasian was honoured for his military prowess, and feared for his military firmness;

but the simplicity of his tastes exempted him from the temptation to outshine the magnates of the city, and his frugal habits sustained him in the path of probity and uprightness. The personal modesty of Trajan was equal to that of his predecessor, and for the brilliant and costly monuments with which he loved to decorate the city he provided by foreign conquests, which at the same time kept his soldiers employed, and engrossed the attention of his most restless subjects. He resided, moreover, only occasionally in the capital, and was preserved by his martial occupations from the dangers of rivalry in show or popularity with the scions of historic families at Rome. The senators felt instinctively that their best security lay in their chief's distant engagements. Hence the prepossession of Tacitus, which would otherwise seem unworthy of him, in favour of military renown. We have remarked his sneers at the peaceful disposition ascribed to earlier princes, and the contrast he exultingly indicates between the pusillanimity of Tiberius, of Claudius, or of Nero, and the victorious ardour of his own patron. It was but too true, as the nobles were well aware, that the liberties of Rome, the pre-eminence, more properly, of the Roman optimates, was only maintained, as far as it was maintained at all, under any of the emperors, by the subjugation of the foreigner, and the overthrow of liberty abroad. Such is the theory carelessly avowed by Lucan; and the thoughtful historian, though more reticent in expression, betrays no more real respect for the dignity and common rights of man than the impetuous rhetorician of the *Pharsalia.*[1]

[1] This spirit appears in many passages of Lucan's poem. Compare more particularly i. 8. foll., vii. 421. foll. It is betrayed by Tacitus wherever he speaks of the foreign affairs of the empire, and of her contests with Britons, with Germans, or with Parthians. The "Life of Agricola" is animated with it throughout, nor is it banished even

The theory of Roman politics to which Tacitus committed himself involved him in two sins against truth and candour. We cannot read the *Annals* and *Histories* with care and impartiality without perceiving that the author often allows himself to repeat anecdotes which he knew to have no firm foundation, for the sake of illustrating the view he chooses to give of some prominent personages. No passage in the *Annals* exemplifies more strikingly the dissimulation imputed to Tiberius, than the reception given to Sejanus's suit for an imperial alliance. Yet the narrative, whatever its source, is highly embellished, if not wholly fabricated.[1] Tacitus, we must say at least, gave it too easy credence, and flung over it a deeper colour, for the sake of the dark shade it casts on the character of the arch dissembler. Nor is this, as has been shown, the only instance of his disregard for truthfulness in subservience to the demands of a theory, which required him to deepen the suspicions attaching to the character of so many of the Cæsars. Again we must remark the artifice by which the crimes and vices of the emperors are arrayed in evidence against the imperial government itself, and denounced as sins against the moral sense of an outraged society. Even if we grant that there is no exaggeration in these hideous pictures, yet we must not allow the most accomplished of painters to disguise the important fact that such horrors belong to the age and the class, and not to the individual culprit only. The barbarities wreaked by Nero and Domitian on the highborn nobles of Rome were but the ordinary precautions of the trembling slaveholders whose lives were held from day to day by the tenure of physical repression unrelentingly exer-

Certain characteristics of his unfairness to the earlier period.

from the "Germany," the subject of which afforded a graceful opportunity for renouncing and regretting it.

[1] See above in chapter xlv. of this history (Tac. *Ann.* iv. 39, 40.).

cised against their own bondmen. The existence of slavery, and the lack of religious and moral principle, which loosened the rivets of Pagan society, may account for the atrocities commonly imputed to the inherent viciousness of the imperial system, or to the personal depravity of individual emperors. Tacitus himself was no doubt a master of slaves, and his writings bear, it must be confessed, the impress of a rooted disregard for the rights and feelings of human nature, apart from his own class and order, such as might naturally be engendered by the social atmosphere around him. On the other hand, few even of the gravest characters of our history were exempt from turpitudes which have heaped especial infamy on Tiberius and Nero. Such delinquencies must be weighed with constant reference to a peculiar standard of morals. Even the mild and virtuous Pliny allows himself to compose verses of a nature which would indicate among us the most shameless indecency; and the list of names by which he excuses himself includes a large number of the first citizens of the free state as well as of the empire.[1]

His satirical misrepresentation of his times.

It is not necessary, however, to prove that both the cruelty and the licentiousness of Roman society date from some hundred years before the establishment of the empire, and were the seeds rather than the fruit of the imperial despotism. A more specious charge against the empire is, that under its leaden rule little scope was left for the free and healthy exercise of mind, and

[1] Pliny, *Epp.* iv. 14., v. 3., vii. 4. Such indecencies, neatly expressed in verses of society, after the manner of the later Greek epigrammatists, might be veiled under the euphemism of *facetus* or "elegant." Comp. "tunicis subductis facetus," Hor. *Sat.* i. 2. 26., and the use of the word in Martial's epigrams on Sulpicia, x. 35. 38. Although Tacitus himself is not mentioned by Pliny among the writers of such "Hendecasyllables," the fragmentary notice of Fulgentius in *Mythol.*, "Corn. Tacitus in libro facetiarum," may throw a shade of suspicion even over this grave philosopher.

that the faculties curbed in their legitimate exercise expended themselves on gross material interests. Not the *Histories* only, but all the other works of Tacitus, are drawn up almost in the form of indictments against his own age. The treatise on the *Decline of Eloquence* traces some of the worst symptoms of national degeneracy, not only to the change in the laws, the work of chiefs and princes, but to the change in manners, and especially in education, the same which had been long before remarked and lamented by Horace. The *Life of Agricola* is a satire not only on the timid and jealous emperor, but on the indiscipline of the legions, the incompetency of the commanders, the apathy and sensuality of society, with all which the great captain waged distinguished warfare. The *Germany* presents an elaborate contrast between the vices of a polished age and the virtues of barbarism. It is an alarum rung in the ears of a careless generation, more solemn and impressive in its tone, more interesting from its details, but hardly more sound than Lucan's rhetorical outcry on his countrymen's disgust at poverty, and eager greed of gold. It is much to be regretted that the philosopher should not have recognised, any more than the poet, the regenerative tendencies of his age, and have lent them no support from his name and influence. The aim of the mere satirist is always profitless and generally ill-directed. Not in the harsh and impracticable dogmas of Stoicism, nor merely in the lofty aspirations of Christianity, but even in the wise preaching of schools of eclectic moralists, whom we shall further notice hereafter, lay the germs of renovation; and we shall trace in another generation the action of a Dion, a Plutarch, an Apollonius, and lament that we cannot add to the list of Roman reformers the illustrious name of Tacitus.

Such is the unfairness into which the historian is

betrayed, in attempting to uphold the paradox that the corrupt and tottering oligarchy of the senate under Pompeius and Milo was the noblest and strongest of governments, and the not more defensible paradox that just such a government was restored under the auspices of Nerva and Trajan. We must acknowledge, indeed, that the same training in dialectic subtleties which urged him to maintain a political theory, rendered him generally superior to the rhetorical declaimers before him. In philosophical remark Tacitus is more profound than Cicero, more just than Seneca; while none would pretend to compare him with an ingenious sophist like Sallust. Born in the reign of Claudius or Nero, he passed his early years in the gloomy silence of an age of terror, and the posts in which he was placed by Vespasian and retained by Domitian, constrained him still to control the utterance of the indignant patriotism boiling within him.[1] The habit of looking to the emperor as the source of political action, natural to his position, would give to his account of public affairs a biographical rather than an historical character. The efforts, easily discernible, which he makes to impart to it a more general interest by introducing larger disquisitions on manners, and some statistical details, evince, under these circumstances, unusual vigour of mind. More than once, indeed, Tacitus breaks away, not from the palace only, but from the capital, to describe the

The writings of Tacitus more biographical than historical.

[1] Our nearest approximation to the date of the historian's birth is derived from a passage of Pliny the younger, *Epist.* vii. 20, where he speaks of himself as somewhat the junior of the two. Pliny was born in 63. Tacitus married the daughter of Agricola, about the year 77, being then probably not less than twenty-one. Of his official career, he says, at the beginning of the *Histories:* "Mihi Galba, Otho, Vitellius nec beneficio nec injuria cogniti. Dignitatem nostram a Vespasiano inchoatam, a Tito auctam, a Domitiano longius provectam non abnuerim." He was absent from Rome for four years before the death of Agricola in 93. (*Agric.* 45.); probably in office in the provinces. Nerva made him consul suffect in 97.

condition of the legions on the frontier, or of the foreign possessions of the state. The reader, disgusted with the horrors of the Cæsarean court, glances with pleasure at Egypt and Palestine, and gains a new insight into Roman ideas from the views of an intelligent Roman on the wonders of the Nile-land, or the superstitions of the Jews. But these digressions are rare, and we regret that Tacitus had not more of the spirit of Herodotus, or that his notions of historical composition forbade him to range more freely over the field of Roman politics abroad. We must not fail, however, to give him full credit for what he has done in this particular. Writers of less genius, such as Suetonius for instance, were subdued altogether to the biographical vein by the circumstances of the times. To a Roman citizen, especially if resident in Rome, and still more if engaged, however slightly, in the conduct of affairs, the personal character of the reigning prince, with all the anecdotes which might serve to illustrate it, would naturally supersede every other topic of interest. Whether in the senate or the palace, in the forum or the circus, the Cæsar was the centre of observation. The general welfare of the empire, and the particular interests of cities and provinces, would hardly divert the historian's attention for a moment from the imperial figure in the foreground. He would have no care to generalize his remarks on the current of public affairs. To him the Roman empire would be merely Rome; the people would be lost in their ruler. His curiosity would be confined to the incidents which took place around him in the streets and temples of the great city; to the condition of noble and official families; to the omens reported in the Capitol, and the whispered intrigues of the palace. Hence Suetonius seems to think that he has written a Roman history in his series of

Historical importance of the prince's personal character.

Hence the biographies of Suetonius supply the place of history.

lives of the first twelve Cæsars; and we may believe that his biographies were far more generally read than the broader lucubrations of Tacitus, from the fact that, a century and a half later, an emperor who deduced his lineage from the historian, provided for the annual transcription of ten copies of the *Annals* and the *Histories*.[1] Books that were in general request would have stood in no need of such patronage. And though we owe, perhaps, to this exceptional care the descent of a large portion of the writings of Tacitus to our own day, we still have to regret that they did not possess enough interest for the generations to which they were addressed, to be preserved entire for our instruction. On the other hand, the Cæsarean lives of Suetonius have come down to us entire, or with the loss of one or two pages only; nor have they ever, perhaps, wanted some curious readers throughout the long course of seventeen centuries.

Popularity of historical writing under Trajan.

It is plain, from the date of his birth, that Tacitus must have enjoyed opportunities of personal communication with the survivors of the darkest period of the monarchy, and have been himself a witness to the ghastly profligacy of the Neronian principate. His lofty style and thorough command of language bespeak his familiarity with men of rank and breeding, and though his birth was not illustrious, his father may have been the procurator of that name of Lower Germany recorded by the elder Pliny.[2] It was the position of his family, rather than his own literary merits, that led him, step by step, through the career of office to the consulship. Under Trajan all the works known positively to be his were composed. Two or three slight notices of his position at Rome, and his fame there, are preserved in the letters of Pliny[3]; but

[1] Vopiscus, *in Tacit.* 10. [2] Plin. *Hist. Nat.* vii. 16.
[3] Plin. *Epist* ii. 1., iv. 15., vii. 20., ix. 23.

whether he survived the chief he so much admired, and under whose patriotic sway he ventured to prefer his charges against the imperial monarchy, we are unable to determine.[1] This happy reign was distinguished by the prosecution of Domitian's creatures, and of the wretches who had disgraced the period of blood and pride now closed for ever. All tongues were unloosed; domestic archives were unlocked; history, so long chained or gagged, awoke to freedom, and became by a sudden reaction the common utterance of the age.[2] As might be expected, there was no more ordinary subject of historical composition at this time than that which gave widest scope to the writer's passions, as well as to their rhetorical talent, the sufferings, namely, of their country. Thus C. Fannius wrote a special work on the victims of Nero, of which he left three volumes at his decease.[3] Titinius Capito composed an account of the *Deaths of Famous Men*, and recited each melancholy story to excited listeners among their children and friends.[4] Such publications contributed to exasperate recollections already too painful to be recorded without malice or prejudice; and we may well believe that the horrors of the baleful period so recently passed

[1] Bähr, *Gesch. de Ræm. Liter.* ii. 130., refers to the critics who have ventured to conjecture that Tacitus survived both Pliny and Trajan, and lived to the middle of the reign of Hadrian. In the absence of any authority to this effect I think it unnecessary to examine the subject.

[2] Plin. *Epist.* v. 8.: "Suades ut historiam scribam, et suades non solus: multi hoc me sæpe monuerant. . . . . Historia quoque modo scripta delectat." Vitruvius had said the same long before: "Historiæ per se tenent lectores." *Architect.* præf. lib. v.

[3] Plin. *Epist.* v. 5. Nero appeared to him in a dream, perused the three books deliberately, and then vanished. The author presaged from this vision that he should write no more than the emperor had read. He died, and the work remained unfinished.

[4] Plin. *Epist.* viii. 12.: "Scribit exitus illustrium virorum, in iis quorundam mihi carissimorum." They referred evidently to the martyrdoms of recent tyranny. Capito venerated the images of the Bruti, the Cassii, and the Catos. *Epist.* i. 17.

away, were coloured by the painters with more than their genuine blackness. If, however, the historian traced the narrative of earlier events not from contemporary anecdote merely, but from published sources, he was bound to approach them with caution and discrimination. The official records of those times were doubtless extremely meagre, nor would they be the less open to suspicion of falsification in all important matters, such as wars, treaties and alliances. The incidents of private oppression and suffering which fill the foremost place in the domestic annals we possess of the empire, would be concealed or extenuated, and leave the fewest traces in public documents. Accredited history of these times there was none. From Augustus to Nero, and perhaps later, contemporary writers had shrunk from the composition of history, or their works had been seized and destroyed. But the place of grave and responsible authorities had been supplied by a mass of private anecdotes, repeated from mouth to mouth, which circulated in the depths of domestic privacy, but rarely floated to the surface, while they gathered form and consistence in the ready wit and prurient imaginations of a discontented society. Every noble family had its own dark rumours, its own versions of the circumstances attending the death or exile of its most honoured members. These stories tended to enhance the universal horror of the tyrant in whose hands the issues of life and death had lain, and the kindlier reminiscences of his friends and favourites would be overborne by the greater number and vehemence of injurious libels. From their position, from their temptations, from their own special training, or want of training, it is but too probable that Tiberius, Caius, Nero, and Domitian were really monsters of profligacy and cruelty; but if we carefully weigh the evidence against them, it is still a

question how much of it could be fairly admitted in a court of justice. Most of the adverse witnesses are manifestly interested, and the influences under which Tacitus more especially wrote, as an admirer of Trajan, a partisan of the great houses, a theorist and a satirist, above all, perhaps, as an artist in composition, studious of effects in rhetoric and painting, were hostile to candour and sobriety. Roman history ended, in fact, nearly as it had begun, in the private memorials of the nobles, adapted to declamatory recitation by their flatterers and clients.

Want of a critical spirit in historical writing,

It was under great disadvantages, as regarded his materials, that Tacitus compiled the annals of the Cæsars; but there was another obstacle to a true portraiture of the times, in the want of a critical spirit, common to his age, and indeed generally prevalent in the best periods of Roman literature. The Romans were carefully trained to precision in style; they enjoyed the use of a literary language which acknowledged but one dialect; the inflexions and syntax of the Latin tongue were the same, wherever spoken by men of education, from the Tagus to the Euphrates. It is commonly said, indeed, that the Latin language is adapted only to a limited range of subjects; but there is surely a fallacy in this remark. The subjects to which it was actually applied within the classical period are limited in number and character, and, accordingly, classical authority is wanting for forms and phrases invented in later times to meet the expansion of the human intellect: but with due allowance for such necessary modifications, it may be said of Latin that no vehicle of thought has, in fact, been more widely or variously employed. Latin has been, and still often is adopted as the means of communication on themes of moral and natural science, of philosophy and religion, of mathematics and

combined with acute criticism on grammar.

poetry, of law, history and oratory.[1] All these subjects and others may still be treated, and still are sometimes treated throughout the civilized world, in that comprehensive dialect which was spoken by Cicero and Tacitus, which has never ceased to be read and written for 2000 years. It combines precision with terseness, strength with grace, expressiveness with fluency, beyond, as I believe, any other language; and it was upon these qualities accordingly, that the minds of the Romans were fixed, and to the attainment of these their efforts were directed.[2] They became, almost without exception, as far as their remains allow us to judge, the most accurate speakers and writers of any people in the world. No ingenuity can reduce to the logic of syntax all the eccentricities of Æschylus and Thucydides among the Greeks, while of the best of our own classics there are few perhaps that do not abound in grammatical solecisms. But the acutest criticism can hardly detect a flaw in the idioms of Cicero or Livy, Virgil or Horace, and even the most careless of the Latin poets and historians can rarely be convicted of an error in construction. It is curious, however, to observe how this habitual accuracy deserted the Romans, when they came to dwell on the substance of things instead of the outward modes of expression. To the value of a critical examination of facts they seem to have been almost insensible. Destitute of

[1] Comp. Cicero, *de Fin. Bon. et Mal.* i. 3.: "Non est omnino hic docendi locus: sed ita sentio, Latinam linguam non modo non inopem, ut vulgo putant, sed locupletiorem etiam esse quam Græcam. Quando enim nobis, vel dicam aut oratoribus bonis, aut poetis, postea quidem quam fuit quod imitarentur, ullus orationis vel copiosæ vel elegantis, ornatus defuit?"

[2] Seneca contrasts (*Consol. ad Polyb.* 21.) the force of the Latin with the gracefulness of the Greek language: "Quamdiu steterit aut Latinæ linguæ potentia, aut Græcæ gratia;" and the contrast is no doubt generally just. It may be observed, further, that in his time the full elegance of Latin had not yet been developed by the writers of the Flavian period.

our mechanical means of verification by notes and references, the use they make of their authorities is correspondingly loose and trivial. The historian, who was not required to guard every statement by clear and direct testimonies, was easily led to read carelessly, to quote from memory, and at random. Conscious that he could not be followed to his sources, and convicted of misusing them, he could scarcely resist the temptation to pervert or gloss the truth. Falsehoods advanced for the credit of the nation or of particular families, met with ready indulgence; the habit of falsification once acquired, could not be kept within the bounds ostensibly prescribed; rhetorical amplifications slid swiftly into direct misstatements; the reputation of a great name gave currency to a lie; the critics of the age of Quintilian, the great age of Roman criticism, lynx-eyed in detecting the abuse of a figure of rhetoric or grammar, lacked the training required for the correction of an error in fact, or for weighing evidence. Roman criticism might be the tact of a spectator in the circus, but it was not the acumen of a judge on the tribunal.

The preference of the Romans for biography.

We may ascribe perhaps to this carelessness in regard to history, the undue preference of the Romans for biography. The sketch indeed of an individual life may be worked, as we have sometimes seen in our own day, into the most elaborate picture of the events, characters, and manners of a whole generation. But a taste for biography is much more commonly, and among the Romans it seems to have been uniformly, a taste for mere personal anecdote. It resulted perhaps universally in a perversion of historical truth, a distortion of shape and proportions, if not an absolute misrepresentation of facts. Biography, however, was in favour with the Romans from the dawn of their literature, and in the Flavian period it began to assume

a predominance over every other form, till it finally superseded both history and poetry. The last remains we possess of classical Latinity are the biographies of the later emperors, collected under the title of the *Augustan History*. But the chief writer of this class belongs to the period now before us, and his works are of great interest and value. The lives of the first six Cæsars by Suetonius constitute some of the most important contributions we possess to our collection of reputed facts in history. Those of the six which followed are slighter and less attractive, the descent from the former series to the latter showing how much the author depended on written sources, and how much he was at a loss for materials when he approached his own times, the account of which was still chiefly to be gathered from hearsay. This circumstance is important for estimating the value of his book, and on the whole it enhances our idea of the reliance we may place on it. But the biographical form of composition affords too much temptation to the indolence common at the period, and to the love of effect not less common; nor does Suetonius indeed pretend to be a narrator of events. He notes the salient features of his hero's character, and illustrates them with an abundance of amusing and striking stories, referring only incidentally and obliquely, if at all, to the transactions of his public career. Hence the meagreness of the details that can now be given of the Flavian reigns, compared with the Julian and Claudian, in which we can use the capricious portraiture of Suetonius to complete the regular narratives of Tacitus and Dion. Nor is it in the connexion of historical details only that we feel the slightness of our materials. The biographers, while fixing their eyes on the lineaments of their proper subject, overlook the general circumstances and tendencies of the age. Our view of society in the background is obstructed by the bulk

Suetonius: Lives of the Cæsars.

of the imperial person, occupying the whole field of vision. The Lives of the Roman biographers are wholly deficient in these comprehensive pictures. They can, indeed, only be regarded as heaps of crude material amassed by labourers more or less intelligent, and disposed more or less in order for future application to a work of symmetry and grandeur. But the master-builder never came, and the materials, thus variously collected, have been for the most part dispersed and lost: the fragments now remaining in the pages of Suetonius and his successors, as well as in Victor, Xiphilin and Eutropius, can hardly furnish forth a mere frame or outline of the palace of imperial history.*

Collection of private correspondence.

The free intercourse between men of equal rank which characterized the republic, continued with little diminution under the emperors. The strength of the imperial system resided perhaps in the fact, that the nobles, the dangerous classes of the capital, who might have nursed an explosive spirit of discontent in private, could not refrain, notwithstanding their fear of spies and informers, from congregating in the baths and theatres, or in hardly less public circles at home, thus betraying their habits and thoughts without disguise to the jealous master who watched them. The spirit of biographical narration which distinguishes Roman literature, sprang, no doubt, from the gregariousness of Roman life. Reserved and self-controlled as he showed himself in the tribute of regard or reminiscence he inscribed on the tomb of his associate, the Roman indulged in all the fulness of description and anecdote in the volume he consecrated to his glory. Very many of the leading men at Rome wrote their own lives. An instinct of vanity, the outward show of which they curbed sedulously in themselves and ridiculed in others, impelled them to leave a minute record of their deeds, coloured as they themselves

wished, for posterity. Their longing for posthumous fame exceeded even their anxiety for honour or power during life. The cynical Sulla could relinquish the dictatorship; but he could not refrain from leaving his own panegyric behind him. On the whole, the chief aim of Roman literature at this period was to realize the image and character of the men who belonged to it. Biography was applicable to a few personages of distinction only; but satire and epigram were at hand to drag the most obscure to light, or to merge every personal feature in general pictures of society. For more refined tastes satisfaction might be provided by collecting the letters of men who had filled a space in the public eye, and attracted the curiosity of their own circle. The correspondence of the younger Pliny occupies, accordingly, an important place among the existing documents of the age. It gives the fullest and fairest portrait we possess of a Roman gentleman; nor indeed does any other of the ancients come so near as its writer to our conception of the gentleman in mind, breeding, and position.

The letters of Pliny the younger.

Pliny was born of an honourable stock, belonging to the old Cæcilian house, which was now widely extended. He was adopted by the most learned of public men, his uncle Pliny the naturalist.[1] Under these auspices he was brought up in all the learning of his times, to which he assiduously devoted himself; but his bent was rather to the public exercise of his gifts than to the accumulation of knowledge for its own sake, and he obtained an early footing on the ladder of office, and in the arena of forensic activity. The jurisconsult might

Account of Pliny the younger.

[1] The name of C. Plinius Cæcilius Secundus betokens a change in family nomenclature which became established about this time. At an earlier period we should have read it Plinius Cæcilianus. It seems that the longer form in — anus had now become so common that it ceased to be employed to indicate adoption.

still retain, at least among the highest class, something of his old character as a patron, *obliged by his nobility*, rather than a hired advocate. Pliny entered with zest into the traditional idea of this honourable relation, and if he accepted splendid fees in acknowledgment of his services, took them always in the name of justice, and, as he believed, in the cause of equity.[1] It was his pride to emulate the great pleaders of the commonwealth, in the defence of injured provincials, or the arraignment of delators; and the state of affairs under Nerva and Trajan afforded scope for the exercise of this honourable ambition.[2] He succeeded in turn to the chief magistracies, which he tried in vain to imagine something more than a shadow of their former importance; and he governed the province of Bithynia after the pattern recommended by the humane protector of the Sicilians, the accuser of the tyrant Verres.[3] But Pliny emulated his master Cicero, though at an immeasurable distance, in the pursuit of literature also. He was proud to be known as the friend of Tacitus, and was elated with a pardonable vanity, when a provincial

[1] The subject of the advocate's remuneration has been treated of before. I will repeat here that the clients of the older time had resented the payment of fees to their patrons as savouring too much of a tribute from the plebs to the patriciate. (Liv. xxxiv. 4.) This objection had been confirmed by the Cincian law (A. U. 549), and the advocate had been forbidden to accept prepayment for his services: but neither law nor custom prevented the gratitude of the client from overflowing in a present after the suit was over. Such was the theory of Roman legal practice at this time, and the prætor Licinius Nepos insisted on enforcing it. An amusing letter of Pliny's (*Epist.* v. 21.) describes how this interference was canvassed. Trajan confirmed it with an edict.

[2] Plin. *Epist.* ii. 11, 12., iii. 9., iv. 9. The writer dilates upon the part he took in pleading the cause of the Africans against Marius Priscus, and the Bæticans against Cæcilius Classicus, and again in defending Julius Bassus against the accusation of the Bithynians.

[3] The letter in which Pliny gives advice to his friend about the government of a province is written evidently in imitation of Cicero's well-known epistle to Quintus. *Epist.* viii. 24.

newly arrived conversing with him by chance on the benches of the Circus, exclaimed: *Is it Tacitus or Plinius I have the honour of addressing?*[1] Pliny may at this time have been favourably known already as the author of the *Panegyric*, but the character of his friend's genius had not yet been stamped by the publication of the *Histories* or *Annals*.

Pliny's distinguished friends and correspondents.

The glimpses Pliny gives us of his aristocratic correspondents are not less interesting than the details of his own life and habits. From him we learn almost all we know of Tacitus, who seems to have resided in lettered leisure in the city. Pliny makes us acquainted with Silius Italicus, the refined and wealthy versifier, with Passienus Paulus, an imitator of his ancestor Propertius, with Caninius Rufus, who sang the Dacian war, with Pomponius Saturninus, distinguished alike in history, oratory, and poetry; and he quotes with satisfaction the praises of himself in a well-known epigram of Martial, whose compliments he rewarded with a present on his return to his native Bilbilis.[2] He introduces us to the society of the Greek rhetoricians, such as Euphrates, Isæus, and Artemidorus, who kept themselves decorously in the background among the men of letters in the capital, though it was by these accomplished strangers, probably, that the best literary circles were inspired, and by them that the arts both of eloquent speaking and graceful living were taught and recommended.[3] But second only to theirs was the influence of the brave and noble women, the Fannias and Arrias, the Corellias, the Calpurnias, the Celerinas, the Calvinas, who

[1] Plin. *Ep.* ix. 23.

[2] Plin. *Epist.* i. 16., ii. 8., iii. 7., v. 17., ix. 22. I have mentioned a few only of the literary names in the circle of Pliny's acquaintance. The epigram of Martial on Pliny is x. 19. of the poet's collection. Plin. *Epist.* iii. 21. The whole number of the writer's correspondents is not less than 113.

[3] Plin. *Epist.* i. 10., ii. 3., iii. 11., and others.

maintained in a degenerate age the antique virtues of Roman matronhood.[1] Nor are there wanting in Pliny's sketches of character descriptions of another kind; as of the vanity of the wretched Regulus, the creature of Domitian, suffered by Nerva's lenity to parade his ill-gotten riches among better men, and even seek by villainous arts to increase them[2]; of the attack on Lartius Macedo by his own slaves, and the terrible vengeance of the law[3]; of the sentimental dolphin who was crossed in love on the coast of Africa[4]; of the haunted house at Athens, curious as the exact counterpart of a modern ghost story, and showing how in ancient as in modern times, the instincts of supernaturalism emerged from the prevalent realism of the day.[5] But none perhaps of these interesting letters are so valuable for the insight they give us into life and feelings as those which describe the writer's country seats; or relate how the accomplished Vestricius Spurinna and the elder Pliny passed their time in composition or study, or how he himself diversified his literary leisure with rural amusements. Of the correspondence with Trajan I have already spoken.

Interesting or amusing subjects of many of his letters.

The impression these letters give us of Pliny's character is extremely favourable. It represents him a man of ability and accomplishments, of honour and humanity, kind to his slaves, considerate towards his associates, of genial habits, charmed with the attractions of domestic life,

His correspondence with Trajan.

[1] Plin. *Epist.* iii. 11. 16., iv. 17., vi. 24., vii. 11. 19., ix. 13., and others. Calpurnia (*Epist.* iv. 19.) was Pliny's second wife.

[2] Plin. *Epist.* i. 5., ii. 20., iv. 2., vi. 2.

[3] Plin. *Epist.* iii. 14. The family of slaves were put to death without waiting for the fatal result of the attack which did not follow till afterwards: "Ipse paucis diebus ægre refocillatus non sine ultionis solatio decessit, ita vivus vindicatus ut occisi solent."

[4] Plin. *Epist.* ix. 33.

[5] Plin. *Epist.* vii. 27.: "Velim scire, esse aliquid phantasmata . . putes:—Ego ut esse credam in primis eo ducor, quod audio accidisse Curtio Rufo."

of moral simplicity and picturesque scenery, liberal in his tastes, generous in feeling. With such claims on our regard and even admiration, we may excuse the extravagance of his devotion to a virtuous prince, and his readiness to flatter those whose flattery he doubtless expected in return. Though the letters which thus amiably depict him were published by himself, and many of them written with a view to publication, they enable us to appreciate fairly enough the writer's claim to our regard.

Mutual approximation of the sects of philosophy.

The Stoics and Epicureans.

Pliny's letters give us our nearest view of the ideas and habits of the Roman aristocracy, and they show in a remarkable manner how finely the speculative opinions of the day were actually shaded into one another. When we read of the antagonistic tenets of the Stoics and Epicureans, and hear, not from poets and satirists only, but from grave historians, such as Tacitus, of the strong features which marked their consistent professors, when we know that Vespasian and Domitian issued special edicts against the disciples of Chrysippus and Cato, and are led to suppose that these men were in some way actively hostile to the government, it is not without surprise that we remark in the pages of Pliny now before us, how little distinctive there seems really to have been in the temper and notions of the Stoics compared with other educated citizens. At all times, under every form of government, men will be divided into those who take life seriously and try to follow a rule and embody an idea, and the larger number who swim with the stream and merely seek to extract enjoyment, without too great an effort, from the position in which they find themselves. It is probable, indeed, that in the darkest ages, and under the worst tyrants, this difference of character was more prominent, and did actually effect some outward severance between the members of the Roman aristocracy; but undoubtedly, as soon

as the pressure of persecution was relaxed, the profession of Stoicism dwindled to a few trifling formalities, and it was again by natural temper, not by creeds and tenets, that men were distinguished from one another.

Prevalence of suicide at this period.

The letters of Pliny abound in instances of self-murder, a practice which at this time may almost be dignified with the name of a national usage. Nothing, however, would be more erroneous than to suppose that this was a principle of the Stoics, or was the distinguishing practice of the sect. Suicide, in the view of their professed teachers, was barely excusable in the last resort, when there plainly remained no other escape from a restraint which denied to man the object of his existence. Cato persuaded himself that he could not serve his own moral being under the rule of a despot; but this was allowed, even on his own principles, to be a perverse and extravagant view; and his example, effective as it proved in gaining imitators, was followed by the Epicurean Cassius as devoutly as by the Stoic Brutus. From that time, while the practice of self-immolation became more and more frequent, it seems to have been more commonly affected by the selfish and wilful men of pleasure, than by the austere votaries of virtue under whatever nominal profession. But the true and consistent disciples of the Porch, whether they protested openly, at all hazards, against the tyranny of the times, or constrained themselves to the public service in sullen submission to it, refused to flee from the bondage in which they lay by the subterfuge of the coward and the voluptuary. We need not pass too austere a judgment on the sick and aged who thus courted present relief from suffering, and even made their escape from a painful existence with a show of dignity and fortitude. But we must guard ourselves against confounding such ordinary mortals

Suicide not a principle of the Stoics.

with the genuine patriots and sages, who proved themselves generally superior to this morbid intemperance. Pliny, indeed, betrays a certain admiration for the courage of these persons, many of whom were of the number of his own friends; but we may believe that the true philosophers, such as Cornutus, Thrasea, and Helvidius, would have held them in little honour. The fashion, for such it evidently became, was the result of satiety and weariness, or, at best, of false reasoning; but the fact that suicide was never so rife as under the beneficent sway of Trajan, shows that it was by no means the resource of political indignation, chafing against its prison bars, which it has been so commonly represented.

Nor practised as an escape from tyranny.

Nor is it the habit of suicide itself that marks the age and the people so strikingly, as the mode in which it is accomplished, the publicity, the solemnity, and even the ostentation that attend it. *I have just suffered a great loss,* writes Pliny: *my friend Corellius Rufus is dead, and by his own act, which embitters my sorrow. No death is so much to be lamented as one that comes not in the course of fate or nature. . . . . Corellius, indeed, was led to this resolve by the force of reason, which holds with philosophers the place of necessity, although he had many motives for living, a sound conscience, a high reputation and influence; not to mention a daughter, a wife, a grandson, sisters, and true friends besides. But he was tortured by so protracted a malady, that his reasons for death outweighed all these advantages. For three-and-thirty years, as I have heard him declare, he had suffered from gout in the feet. The disorder was hereditary with him. . . . . In the vigour of life he had checked it by sobriety and restraint; when it grew worse with increasing years, he had borne it with fortitude and patience. I visited him one day, in*

Suicide of Corellius Rufus.

Domitian's time, and found him in the greatest suffering; for the disease had now spread from the feet through all his limbs. His slaves quitted the room, for such was their habit whenever an intimate friend came to see him; and such was his wife's practice also, though she could have kept any secret. After casting his eyes around, he said, Why do you suppose it is that I continue so long to endure these torments? I would survive the ruffian just one day. *Had his body been as strong as his mind, this wish he would have effected with his own hand. God granted it, however, and when he felt that he should die a free man, he burst through all the lesser ties that bound him to life. The malady, which he had tried so long to relieve by temperance, still increased: at last his firmness gave way. Two, three, four days passed and he had refused all food. His wife, Hispulla, sent our friend Geminius to me, with the melancholy news that her husband had resolved to die, and would not be dissuaded by her prayers or her daughter's: I alone could prevail with him. I flew to him. I had almost reached the spot, when Atticus met me from Hispulla, to say that even I could not now prevail, so fixed had become his determination. To his physician, indeed, on food being offered him, he had said,* I have decided; *an expression which makes me the more regret him, as I the more admire him. I think to myself, What a friend, what a man have I lost!* He had completed, indeed, his sixty-seventh year, an advanced age even for the most robust: *yes, I know it.* He has escaped from his long-protracted illness: *I know it.* He has died, leaving his dearest friends behind him, and the state, which was still dearer to him, in prosperity. *This, too, I know. Nevertheless, I lament his death, no less than if he were young and vigorous; I lament it—do not think me weak in saying so—on my own account. For I have lost, yes, I have lost a*

witness of my own life, a guide, a master. In short, I will say to you, as I said to my friend Calvisius, I fear I shall myself live more carelessly for the future.[1]

Another letter, of similar character, relates to the death of Silius Italicus, the patrician, the consular, the poet and man of letters. Pliny hears that this noble personage had starved himself in his villa at Neapolis. *The cause of his death was ill-health; for he suffered from an incurable tumour, the irksomeness of which determined him to hasten his end with unshaken resolution.*[2] Of another distinguished contemporary, the jurisconsult Aristo, the same writer records, that he had desired him with other intimate friends, to demand of the physicians whether his malady was really incurable; for, if so, he would manfully terminate his own existence. Were there, however, any reasonable prospect of relief, he would endure it with fortitude, however obstinate and tedious; for so he had promised his wife and daughter; and he felt, moreover, under an obligation to his friends, not to frustrate their wishes by a voluntary death, if there were any hope for him. *This,* says Pliny, *I consider more than usually difficult and praiseworthy. For to rush upon death with impetuosity and ardour is common to many;*

Of Silius Italicus.

[1] Plin. *Epist.* i. 12.

[2] Plin. *Epist.* iii. 7. The writer speaks with great respect of this man, whose habits were not unlike his own. But Silius had incurred the charge of subservience to Nero: "Læserat famam suam sub Nerone; credebatur sponte accusasse." He had recovered his character by his honest bearing under Vitellius, and had gained approbation for his conduct in the government of Asia: "Maculam veteris industriæ laudabili otio abluerat. Fuit inter principes civitatis sine potentia, sine invidia. Salutabatur, colebatur: multumque in lectulo jacens cubiculo semper, non ex fortuna frequenti, doctissimis sermonibus dies transigebat, cum a scribendo vacaret. Scribebat carmina majore cura quam ingenio." Here Pliny seems to refer not to the epic poem of the "Punica," written long before, but to the copies of verses Silius was in the habit of composing in his old age.

but to deliberate about it, and discuss the arguments for it and against it, and live or die accordingly, is worthy of a great mind. And the doctors, it seems, do give us hopes. May the Gods confirm them, and relieve me at least from this anxiety, which, when I am rid of, I shall return to my Laurentine villa, to my papers and tablets and literary leisure.[1]

Suicide prevailed among the women.

The resolution of the men was rivalled by that of the women also, and was supported apparently in either case, more by natural force of character, and innate daring, than by any training in speculative philosophy. The illustrious deed of Arria, the wife of Pætus, who, when her husband was sentenced for conspiring with Scribonianus, gave herself the first blow, and handed him the dagger, with the words, *It is not painful*, was, it seems, no act of sudden impulse, but the accomplishment of a deliberate resolution not to survive him. While his fate was yet doubtful, she had intimated this intention to her relatives, and they had tried in vain to dissuade her. To Thrasea, her son-in-law, who had asked whether she would wish her own daughter thus to sacrifice herself in the event of his decease: *Yes, assuredly*, she had replied, *if she shall have lived as long and as well with you, as I have lived with my Pætus.* When accordingly they kept a stricter watch over her, to prevent the execution of her design, she had told them that their precautions were fruitless. *You can make me die shockingly*, she had said, *but you cannot prevent my dying:* and therewith she had leapt from her seat, and dashed her head violently against the wall. Stunned and bruised, she exclaimed on recovering: *I told you that I would find a way to death, however painful, if you refused me an easy one.*[2] The admiration Pliny

[1] Plin. *Epist.* i. 22.

[2] Plin. *Epist.* iii. 16. Compare another notable case of perverted principle (vi. 24.). A couple of mature years, long married, dwelt

expresses for this fierce-minded creature, whose memory was treasured in the hearts of her family, shows in what honour the suicide even of women was held, in the dislocation of the true moral sense among the Romans of the period.[1]

This proneness to suicide not the result of speculative opinions.

Had indeed the feeling which prompted these acts of self-sacrifice been the result merely of speculative opinions about virtue and duty, it would have caused little uneasiness to the tyrants. But indicating, as it really did, a contempt of life, and recklessness of personal consequences, it might alarm them with a sense of their own insecurity. Hence the distress of Tiberius at the fatal resolution of Cocceius Nerva; hence the visit, the inquiries, the entreaties to abstain from it, and lastly the avowal that the suicide of a distinguished guest of the palace, with no obvious motive, would be injurious to the prince's reputation.[2] The emperors readily imagined that the men who held their own lives in so little estimation might at any moment cast them on the die of revolt or assassination, and they conceived that there was no way to disarm such fanatical hostility, but to divert it from the contemplation of high and generous objects by the grossest dissipation. This was the snare into which the discontented nobles too easily fell. They escaped from the fatigue of public affairs, which had lost their redeeming interest, in a round of sensual, or at best of idle pleasures, and cloaked their dereliction of duty as citizens under the name of philosophy,

in a villa on the banks of the lake Larius. The man suffered from a distressing malady: the wife assured herself that it was incurable, told him that there was nothing for him but to kill himself, promised that she would not desert him, tied herself to him, and tumbled with him into the water.

[1] A painful illustration of this proneness to suicide in women occurs in the case of Paulina the wife of Seneca. Tac. *Ann.* xv. 60.

[2] Tacitus, *Ann.* vi. 20. The story has been already referred to in chapter xlv. of this history.

which should have taught them another lesson. They made it the aim of their lives to cultivate inward satisfaction, a good conscience, as they sententiously entitled it, by keeping jealously out of sight those worthy ends of existence which, under their circumstances, were difficult, perhaps impossible to attain. Their eclectic philosophy, whether it took the name of the Porch, the Garden, or the Academy, was generally the parade of rhetorical axioms on the uncertainty or vanity of life, and the superiority of the truly wise to all earthly distresses, such as vex the souls of ordinary mortals.[1]

Voluptuousness and coarseness of the times.

This aping of the ancient wisdom was the common fashion of the day among the polished classes of society; but it might be combined with almost any mode of life, such as in many cases little deserved association with it. The increasing splendour of the shows and contests, gymnastic or literary, encouraged by the patronage of the prince himself, began to fascinate the Roman magnate, who at an earlier period would have abandoned these frivolous enjoyments to the Greeks, their inventors and introducers.[2] Both Pliny and Tacitus attended the spectacles of the circus, which Cicero and even Seneca would have regarded as a weakness, perhaps as a disgrace.[3] But such recreations were

[1] Comp. Statius, *Sylv.* ii. 2. 129.:

"Nos vilis turba caducis
Deservire bonis, semperque optare parati,
Spargimur in casus; celsa tu mentis ab arce
Despicis errantes, humanaque gaudia rides."

But the sage, who thus despised all worldly gratifications, looked down upon the world from the fairest paradise in the Surrentine hills.

[2] Lucan, *Phars.* vii. 270.:

"Graiis delecta juventus
Gymnasiis aderit, studioque ignava palæstræ."

[3] Plin. *Epist.* ix. 23. Tacitus attended the Circensian games. I have referred in chapter xli. to the unfavourable opinions of Cicero (*Tusc. Disp.* ii. 17.) and Seneca (*de Brev. Vit.* 13.).

innocent compared with the gross sensualities in which the great too often indulged, with the words of Plato and Chrysippus on their lips.[1] The pleasures of the bath and table attained a solemn recognition from the men of letters and philosophy. The revived attractions of the camp and military service exercised also a marked effect on the forms of society. The coarse licence of the tent or the trenches penetrated into the halls and gardens of the Italian noble. Beneath the loose flowing garb of the forum a moral restraint had been concealed, which was completely thrown off under the pressure of the cuirass, and to which, after a long period of indulgence abroad, it was difficult again to submit at home. The lite-

The tone of society corrupted by the soldiery.

rature of the times suggests to us pictures of the rude presumption of tribunes and centurions, who corrupted the tone of polite society in which they affected to mingle on equal terms. Trajan himself, who had passed most of his days among soldiers, had his carouses and boon companions, and the fashion set by princes has more influence on the mass of their subjects than the example of recluse philosophers. From this period we discover a marked decline in the intellectual character of the Roman people. Though the names of historians, poets, and orators continued to abound in our records, they become little better than empty sounds; for their works have almost wholly perished, and we can only account for this general disappearance by the trifling estimation they retained after the lapse of a single generation. But the Flavian period still did honour to the ennobling influence of letters. The extent to which many of the noblest citizens were influenced by a genuine taste for acquiring knowledge is striking and affecting. It

[1] Juvenal, ii. 4.: "Quamquam plenâ omnia gypso
Chrysippi invenies."
Comp. Martial, i. 25., vii. 58.; Quintil. *Instit. Orat.* procem. i.

shows how strongly in default of the highest objects of human interest, of religious aspirations and political ambition, all the powers of the mind may be engrossed by any subject which deals with thoughts and feelings common to our nature. Thus it was also that composition, still confined as strictly as ever to the highest ranks, became among them the employment of many. Though the greater number of these lordly scribblers may never have given their productions to the public, nor even recited them to their own acquaintances, the habit of reading, extracting, and annotating seems to have spread widely, and to have formed a regular part of existence throughout a distinguished circle.

Habits of the more refined and intelligent among the nobles.

Example of Vestricius Spurinna.

The manner in which Vestricius Spurinna, an active public officer in the prime of life, a diligent student in old age, spent the days of his dignified retirement, may be noted as an example of the habits of his class. *I know not that I ever passed a pleasanter time,* says Pliny, *than lately with Spurinna; there is indeed no man I should so much wish to resemble in my own old age, if I am permitted to grow old. Nothing can be finer than such a mode of life. For my part, I like a well-ordered course of life, particularly in old men, just as I admire the regular order of the stars. Some amount of irregularity and even of confusion is not unbecoming in youth; but everything should be regular and methodical with old men, who are too late for labour, and in whom ambition would be indecent. This regularity Spurinna strictly observes, and his occupations, trifling as they are (trifling, that is, were they not performed day by day continually), he repeats as it were in a circle. At dawn he keeps his bed; at seven he calls for his slippers; he then walks just three miles, exercising his mind at the same time with his limbs. If friends are by, he discourses seriously with them;*

if not, he hears a book read; and so he does sometimes even when friends are present, if it be not disagreeable to them. He then seats himself, and more reading follows, or more conversation, which he likes better. By and by he mounts his carriage, taking with him his wife, a most admirable woman, or some friends, as myself for instance, the other day. What a noble, what a charming tête-à-tête! how much talk of ancient things; what deeds, what men you hear of! what noble precepts you imbibe, though indeed he refrains from all appearance of teaching. Returning from a seven-mile drive, he walks again one mile; then sits down or reclines with the stylus in his hand. For he composes lyrical pieces with elegance both in Greek and Latin. Very soft, sweet and merry they are, and their charm is enhanced by the decorum of the writer's own habits. When the hour of the bath is announced, that is, at two in summer, at three in winter, he strips and takes a turn in the sun, if there is no wind. Then he uses strong exercise for a considerable space at tennis; for this is the discipline with which he struggles against old age. After the bath he takes his place at table, but puts off eating for a time, listening in the meanwhile to a little light and pleasant reading. All this time his friends are free to do as he does, or anything else they please. Supper is then served, elegant and moderate, on plain but ancient silver. He uses Corinthian bronzes too, and admires without being foolishly addicted to them. Players are often introduced between the courses, that the pleasures of the mind may give a relish to those of the palate. He trenches a little on the night, even in summer; but no one finds the time long, such are his kindness and urbanity throughout. Hence now, at the age of sixty-seven, he both hears and sees perfectly; hence his frame is active and vigorous; he has nothing but old age to remind him

to take care of himself. . . . Such, adds the writer, *is the mode of life to which I look forward for myself, and on which I will enter with delight, as soon as advancing years allow me to effect a retreat. Meanwhile I am harassed by a thousand troubles, in which Spurinna is my consolation, as he has ever been my example. For he too, as long as it became him, discharged duties, bore offices, governed provinces; and great was the labour by which he earned his relaxation.*[1]

The true man of letters. Pliny the elder.

Such a mode of life was probably not uncommon, and implied no special devotion to literary occupation. Of the true man of letters we have an eminent and conspicuous example in the elder Pliny; for the public functions this prodigy of assiduous industry discharged did not prevent him from reading and writing more unremittingly and more copiously than perhaps any of his contemporaries *He was a man,* says his nephew emphatically, *of quick parts, of incredible industry, and the least possible sleep.*[2] *From the twenty-third of August he began to study at midnight, and through the winter he continued to rise at one, or at the latest at two in the morning, often at twelve.*[3] *Before daybreak he used to go to the emperor; for he too worked at night. Thence he betook himself to his official duties. On returning home he again gave what time remained to his studies. After taking food, which in the morning was light and*

[1] Plin. *Ep.* iii. 1.

[2] Comp. the elder Pliny's account of himself, *Hist. Nat.* præf.: "Occupati sumus officiis, subcesivisque temporibus ista curamus, id est nocturnis." Sleep he counted among the infirmities of nature: "Profecto enim vita vigilia est."

[3] Plin. *Epist.* iii. 5.: "Lucubrare Vulcanalibus (x. kal. Sept. *i. e.* Aug. 23.) incipiebat, non auspicandi causa, sed studendi, statim a nocte multa." "Lucubrare" is to study by lamp-light. This was done once on the morning of the Vulcanalia, "auspicandi, *i. e.* boni ominis causa," but the practice not usually continued. Pliny persevered.

digestible, as in the olden time, he would often in summer recline in the sun, if he had leisure. A book was then read to him, on which he made notes, or extracted from it. He read nothing he did not extract from. For he would say there was no book so bad you could not get some good from it. After his sunning he generally took a cold bath; then a slight repast, and a very little sleep. Then, as if beginning a new day, he studied till supper time. During supper a book was read, and notes made on it as it went on. I remember one of his friends once stopping the reader, who had pronounced a word ill, and making him repeat it. Did you not understand him? *said my uncle. He admitted that he had.* Why then did you stop him? We have lost ten more lines by this interruption. *Such a miser was he of his time. He rose from supper in summer time by daylight; in winter before seven in the evening, as regularly as if constrained by law. This was his mode of life in the midst of his official labours, and in the turmoil of the city. In the country he exempted only his bathing time from study. I mean the actual use of the bath itself, for while he was being rubbed and dried, he would listen to reading or himself dictate. In travelling he considered himself free from every other care, and gave himself entirely to study. He kept a scribe at his side with a book and tablets, whose hands in winter were armed with gloves, that even the cold weather might not rob him of a moment; and with this view he used even at Rome to be carried in a litter. I remember his rebuking me for taking a walk.* You might have managed, *he said,* not to lose those hours. *For he considered all time lost which was not given to study. It was by this intense application that he completed so great a number of books, and left me besides a hundred and sixty volumes of Extracts, written on both sides of*

the leaf, and in the minutest hand, so as to double the amount. . . . . Would you not think, on remembering how much he read and wrote, that he had had no part in affairs, nor enjoyed the friendship of a prince? and again, when you hear how much time he devoted to business, would you not suppose that he neither read nor wrote at all? . . . . It makes me smile when people call me studious, for idle indeed am I compared with him.

Mode of life of Pliny the younger.

The habits indeed of the younger Pliny admitted of a greater variety of interests, and the practice of forensic speaking required him to mix more freely in society, and to take a larger share in the ordinary transactions of life. During part of the year he resided at Rome; for some months annually he enjoyed the combination of town and country in his suburban villa at Laurentum, whence he could come to the city as often as business required. But he sometimes indulged himself with a more complete change of scene among the hills of Etruria, or on the banks of the Larius, in his own native region.[1] In the country he led, according to his own account, rather an idle life, amusing himself with field sports; but there is something still more pleasing in the kindly feeling with which he interests himself in the concerns of his neighbours and fellow-townsmen, providing for the maintenance of their orphan children, erecting a temple at his own expense in a country village, and placing in the sanctuary of his native town a Corinthian bronze, too choice in material and workmanship for his own modest altar.[2] As a man high in office, and a popular advocate, he had acquired lage means, and his villas, notwithstanding the professed moderation of his tastes and

[1] Besides his Laurentinum and Tuscum and at least two seats on the lake of Como, Pliny possessed country houses at Tusculum, Præneste and Tibur. *Epist.* v. 6. 45.

[2] Plin. *Epist.* iii. 4. 6.; iv. 1.; vii. 18.; x. 12. Comp. ix. 39.

expenses, were on a scale inferior perhaps to few. The minute descriptions he has left of them are among our most precious documents; and they aid in completing our conceptions of Roman domestic life.

Magnificence of the dwellings of the nobility.

Magnificence in the exterior of private dwellings is generally a late product of civilization, and the Greeks and Romans, who long disregarded it entirely, attached to the last but a secondary interest to it. To the façades of their temples they gave all the splendour and elegance they could command, for the temple was the visible token of the deity, and the homage paid him by his worshippers was conducted in front of his sanctuary, while the interior cell in which his image was shrouded was for the most part low, dark, and narrow. But in their private residences this usage was originally reversed. At home they displayed their taste and luxury in the decoration of their interiors, while in their exterior character they regarded convenience only.

The Roman principle of adorning the exterior of their temples, but the interior of their dwellings.

The portico was indeed a necessary adjunct to the temple; its noble span was first invented for use rather than for ornament, to shelter the worshippers who could not be admitted within the sanctuary, and this necessity produced in the progress of the art the most striking and sumptuous features of ancient architecture. But the grand columnar vestibule was not required for the dwelling-house, and accordingly formed no part in the ordinary elevation of a Roman villa. While, on the other hand, the temple was a simple edifice of limited dimensions, however handsome in its proportions, the patrician palace extended over an indefinite area, and comprised an endless variety of parts, which it would have taxed the genius of the greatest architects to combine in one harmonious design. It does not appear indeed that any such attempt was made. The

palace of the Cæsars was the creation of a succession of ambitious builders, who threw out long colonnades in various directions, connecting hall with hall, and tower with tower, without plan or symmetry, with no view to unity of appearance of architectual proportion. Such was the Golden House of Nero; and hence the fitness of the common comparison of a palace to a city, a comparison sufficiently just among the Romans, but which would hardly occur under our modern habits. The emperor alone could command so vast a space within the walls of the capital; but in the country many a wealthy citizen indulged his ideas of comfort and magnificence on a scale perhaps not less extravagant, covering broad tracts of land with apartments for every purpose of life, connected with porticos and open cloisters, and enclosing plots of garden-ground, or planted at the end of marble terraces or alleys of box and planes, wherever a favourite view could be commanded, whether near or distant. The Roman villa, in the later acceptation of the term, the luxurious summer retreat rather than the residence on the farm which it originally signified, was placed either on the sea-shore or among the hills, for the sake of coolness; and its arrangements were chiefly devised with a view to personal comfort. The Laurentine of Pliny faced the Tyrrhene sea, and extended in one direction only, parallel to the coast. It consisted of numerous rooms, of various forms and dimensions, and designed for various uses, united by open galleries. Most of these chambers commanded, as may be supposed, a sea view, and enjoyed nearly a southern aspect. Some were circular, and looked forth in all directions; others semicircular, and screened only from the north; others again excluded the prospect of the water, and almost its noises; some faced west, some east, to be used at different seasons, or even different

Vast extent of the Roman palaces.

Pliny's Laurentine villa.

times of the day.[1] Behind this long line of buildings, the outward appearance of which is no where indicated, but which seems in no part to have risen above the ground-floor, lay gardens, terraces, and covered ways for walking and riding; and among these were placed also some detached apartments, such as we might call summer-houses; while still farther in the rear rose the primeval pine-woods of the Latian coast, which supplied the baths with fuel, and formed a chief recommendation of the locality. The Tuscan villa of the same proprietor seems to have been more extensive, and even more elaborately constructed.

Pliny's Tuscan villa.

Pliny's description of it is remarkable for the sense it shows of the picturesque, and the intimation it affords, that not himself only, but others of his class, partook in no slight degree of that enjoyment of natural scenery which is the special boast of our own age and country. Pliny takes great pains to impress on his correspondent the sylvan beauties of the spot, the wide range of plain and meadow stretching before it to the Tiber, the slope of leafy hills on the skirt of which it lay, the massy amphitheatre of the Apennines behind it; and it is not till he has expatiated with warmth on these sentimental attractions that he refers to the eligibility of the sight for its material conveniences, the abundance of wood, the fertility of the soil, the serviceableness of the river, navigable in winter and spring for barges, to convey its produce to the Roman market. The account of the edifice itself is similar to that of the Laurentinum, though even more complicated in its details. It is approached by a long portico, leading to an atrium or central hall, such as formed the

[1] Hume, in his *Essay on the Populousness of Ancient Nations*, remarked that, "The buildings of the Romans were very like the Chinese houses at this day, where each apartment is separated from the rest, and rises no higher than a single story;" a description which has been amply confirmed by the accounts of the imperial summer palace beyond the walls of Pekin.

nucleus of the town-residence; but there the likeness ends, for whereas in the house at Rome all the living rooms open upon the atrium, and lie compactly arranged within the four outer walls, in the villa almost every apartment is substantially independent of the rest, and only slightly connected with them by suites of open galleries. The Tuscum seems to have abounded also in gardens and plantations, its situation being better adapted for such luxuries than the sea-shore. But neither in this case is there any mention of the exterior appearance, nor any hint that the reader might be expected to derive pleasure from the description of it. It is evident that an architectual design did not enter into the ideas either of Nero, when he flaunted over Rome with his palace of palaces, or of the elegant master of the patrician villa by the sea or on the hill-side.[1]

The Surrentine villa of Pollius.

We possess another description of a villa, less particular indeed, but hardly less vivid, in a very animated poem of Statius. The pleasure-house of the noble Pollius occupied the finest spot for such a luxury that all the Roman dominions could offer.[2] It stood on the summit of a low promontory, immediately west of the little town of Surrentum, and looked in a northerly direction across the Campanian Crater to Neapolis. On the right and left the shore was indented by two small bays, in one of which the stranger who came by sea from Naples—such is the poet's description of his own arrival—ran his bark upon the beach. On the margin of the water he encountered a bath-house, furnished with double chambers for the salt element and the fresh; for at this point a stream,

[1] Plin. *Epist.* ii. 17., v. 6.

[2] Statius, *Sylv.* ii. 2. The "villa Surrentina of Pollius" may be compared throughout with iii. 1., the "Hercules Surrentinus" and i. 3., the "villa Tiburtina of Vopiscus." Comp. also, on a smaller scale, the villa on the Janiculum, Martial, iv. 64., and again x. 30.

descending from the hills, made its way into the sea.[1] A little fane with a statue of Neptune fronted and defied the billows, while another of Hercules faced the land, and seemed to guard the tranquil retreat.[2] Statius climbed the hill, under the shelter of a colonnade, which led direct to the villa, and reminded him of the ancient glories of the covered way which still scaled the ascent from Lechæum to Corinth. The villa itself occupied a platform, and was divided, like those before described, into a long series of chambers, facing the bay of Naples, and commanding the varied line of coast from Stabiæ to Misenum, with the island cliffs of Inarime and Prochyta. Of these chambers, some opened to the south, and looked landwards, and in these the resonance of the surges was never heard.[3] These apartments, and the terraces, open or covered, which connected them, were adorned with painting and sculpture in marble, and in bronze more precious than gold, the effigies of warriors, poets and philosophers. They were decorated, moreover, with variegated slabs, much loved by the opulent and magnificent, from the quarries of Egypt, Libya, and Phrygia.[4] The platform occupied

[1] Stat. *Sylv.* ii. 2.

"Gratia prima loci, gemina testudine fumant
Balnea, et e terris occurrit dulcis amaro
Nympha mari."

[2] Stat. *l. c.*: "Gaudet gemino sub numine portus. Hic servat terras, hic sævis fluctibus obstat." The Greeks, and their imitators the Romans, studied appropriateness in the choice of statues for particular localities. Thus Neptune was suited to a temple or grotto on the sea-shore; Narcissus to a fountain, &c. Pausan. ii. 25. 4.; Callistratus, 5. The people of Alabanda committed a solecism in taste when they placed statues of advocates in their gymnasium, and of wrestlers, &c. in their forum. Vitruv. iii. 5.; see Feuerbach, *der Vatican Apollo*, p. 179.

[3] Stat. *l. c.*

"Hæc videt Inarimen, illi Prochyta aspera paret . . .
Hæc pelagi clamore fremunt, hæc tecta sonoros
Ignorant fluctus, terræque silentia malunt."

[4] Stat. *l. c.*: "Hic Graiis penitus desecta metallis Saxa."

by the house and its precincts was artificially prepared for them by scarping the cliffs and levelling the inequalities of the ground, by clearing woods in one place, by planting groves in another, till the whole might be compared to the creation of an Amphion or an Orpheus.[1] This much-laboured site was sheltered from the winds which eddied from the land by the mountain range here projecting from the Campanian Apennines, and gradually descending to the promontory of Minerva. The slopes were planted with vines, celebrated for their strong and generous produce, and were lost at last in undulating corn-fields, which extended to the very edge of the waters, and glistened in the sun with the spray of the billows.[2]

Considerations on the taste of the Romans in building, &c.

But with whatever rapture the poet expatiates on the prospect from these terraces and windows, he has no word for the view of the villa itself from the bay or landing-place, the view on which his own eye would naturally rest as he crossed the water from Neapolis. In a modern description of such a lordly dwelling, the elevation of the house would be the first object of interest to the spectator, and its praise the most acceptable compliment to its owner. Such is the antagonism between ancient and modern feeling on these subjects. Our noblest palaces are often purposely placed where the prospect is confined to the depths of the woods attached to them. We complain that the ancients betray little sense of the picturesque in landscape; but with us too it is but a recent practice to give our houses the command of an extensive survey; our fathers rather chose secure and sheltered spots for building, and delighted more in the palatial front, and towering elevation, as beheld

[1] Stat. *l. c.*: "Et tu saxa moves, et te nemora alta sequuntur."
[2] Stat. *l. c.*: "Quid nunc ruris opes, pontoque novalia dicam
Injecta, et madidas Baccheo nectare rupes?"

from without, than in the varied scenes of nature which opened on the spectator from within. For this discrepancy motives might readily be discovered in differences of climate, and even of national disposition. The Romans retained to the last a certain simplicity of taste in limiting their views to their own domestic comfort and enjoyment, rather than soliciting admiration from strangers. In their dress as well as in their buildings, in the general tenor of their social habits, they attached more importance to personal convenience than to the judgment of their neighbours. Fleeing from the painful glare of the Italian sun, they buried themselves in vaults beneath the ground, where no other eyes could witness their indulgences. Such are the chambers still remaining beneath the surface of the Palatine, which belonged, as is believed, to the imperial residence; such were the apartments, deeply sunk in the basement of the Baths of Titus, whence the masterpieces of ancient art were drawn forth, never before revealed to the view of the multitude. The Nymphea, or bath-houses of the emperors and nobles on the margin of the Alban Lake, were sheltered from every gaze, though doubtless they were decorated internally with splendour and voluptuousness. In quest of coolness and the grateful breeze, the patrician thrust his villa upon the bosom of the lake or ocean, and remains have been detected, at the bottom of the lucent Nemi, of a wooden ship or raft of vast dimensions, whereon Trajan, or possibly Tiberius, constructed a retreat, furnished with every luxury, and supplied by pipes with the living waters of the mountains.[1]

Floating palace on the lake of Nemi.

[1] Marchi (*della Architectura Militare*, 1599), relates how he examined with the diving bell the sunken palace, as he calls it, in the lake of Nemi. Some fragments have been raised, and are now preserved in the museums at Rome. There is no apparent ground, however, for his conjecture that this structure was the work of Tra-

Decline of energy, and disappearance of salient features of character among the Romans.

The view of society presented to us in the pages of Pliny, of Statius, and even of Quintilian, is impressed with a character of feeble elegance, such as we commonly connect with the decline of a refined civilization. The voluptuous indolence in which generation after generation has been steeped, seems at last to enervate the fibre of the nation; the virtues and the vices of a decaying society betray equally the departure of the energy and elasticity which marked its lusty maturity. The age produces no more great deeds, nor great thoughts; its very crimes are stunted. The men must be measured by a lower standard, yet fewer than of old will be found to rise above it. That such was the tendency of the times cannot be denied: the growth of human nature must ever be dwarfed by the withdrawal of the sun of liberty. The tyranny of custom and fashion was more effective, perhaps, in reducing men to a vulgar equality in tastes, habits, and opinions, than even the tyranny of a despotic administration. The progress of such a decline had been inevitable, at least from the age of the Scipios. But the movement had been hitherto slow, and we must not be led by fallacious appearances to exaggerate it. If we remark the absence of great events and prominent personages from the epoch before us, the defect may partly be ascribed to the meagreness of its historical remains. In Trajan himself, in Agricola, in Thrasea and Virginius, we catch glimpses at least of men, who, if painted at full length in their genuine colours, might be found no less interesting specimens of human nature than any of the heroes of the republic. What is lacking however in history, may be supplied in part from the writings of two at least

Exceptional manliness of Trajan, Agricola, and others.

jan. The only traces of inscription about it record the name of Tiberius. See Brotier's Notes on his *Supplement to Tacitus*; and Gell's *Topography of Rome*, &c. ii. 113.

among the most conspicuous of our public teachers.

Manliness of Tacitus and Juvenal.

Tacitus and Juvenal are both of them thoroughly manly; they are hearty in their loves and hates, clear in their perceptions, vigorous in their language, consistent in their estimates of good and evil, as men might be who lived in the healthiest and most bracing of social atmospheres. The strength and independence of their minds might befit the early manhood of a people destined to effect great moral conquests. The errors, even of Tacitus and Juvenal, were the most remote from those of social decrepitude, which is generally marked by laxity of moral judgment, indifference to national honour, and sickly sentiment. Of the estimation in which the historian was held we have some account in the letters of Pliny; and though we have no token of Juvenal's reception among his contemporaries, we know that even within the classical period his satires became the theme of annotators and expositors. We may conclude that the age which could appreciate writers so true in moral feeling, and so bold in expressing it, was not destitute of other men of the same stamp, men both of energy and sensibility. The picture of society they drew is indeed sufficiently frightful; nor can we question its general fidelity. But the criminals they lash were at least no milksops in crime, no fribbles in vice. Their tyrants and hypocrites, their sensualists and parasites, are all cast in the strong mould of the Roman free-state. They are genuine countrymen of Catilina and his desperadoes, of Piso and Verres, of Fulvia and Sempronia.

Comparison between Tacitus and Juvenal.

Tacitus and Juvenal may be appropriately compared for the shrewdness with which they analyse motives, and the fierceness of their indignation, though the one is compact, concentrated, and even reserved in the expression of his passion, the other vehement, copious, and declama-

tory. Both have the same definite point of view, as Roman moralists and patriots. But, of the two, Tacitus is what has been called the *best hater;* he is the blinder in his prejudices, the least various in his sympathies with human nature. Tacitus is an instance of what we regret sometimes to meet with among men of ability and experience, the increase with advancing years of bitterness, narrowness and intolerance. Like our own political philosopher Burke, Tacitus grows more acrid, more morbid in temper, even to the last. Little as we know of his life, we may trace the deepening shade in his works, though we have reason to believe that he had not even the excuse of personal or political disappointment. In the *Dialogue on Oratory*, his earliest utterance, he displays a just sense of the evil tendencies of his day; but his rebuke to the spirit of the age is tempered with gentleness and reserve, and shows at least a disposition to appreciate every element of good. But these sympathies speedily evaporate. The *Agricola*, while professedly a panegyric, is in fact a scarcely disguised satire. The praises of the hero are two-edged, and every stroke dealt in his honour recoils with a back-handed blow on the necks of his contemporaries. The *Histories* abound in keen discrimination of crimes and vices, and in burning sarcasms on wickedness in high places; yet even in the *Histories*, the dark picture of sin and suffering is relieved by some broader views of incidents and manners; the moralist remembers sometimes that he is a historian, and seeks to delineate in its salient features the general character of the times. But the *Annals*, the latest of the author's works, the most mature and finished of his productions, is almost wholly satire. Tacitus rarely averts his eyes from the central figure of monstrous depravity, around which, in his view, all society is grouped. He paints

The bitterness of Tacitus increases as he advances in years.

the age all Tiberius, or all Nero. Like the Roman soldier chained to his own prisoner, he finds no escape from the horrors he has undertaken to delineate. He enjoys no relief himself, and he allows none to the reader. His hatred of sin is concentrated in hatred of the sinner, and the exasperation into which he has worked himself against the tyrant overflows at last in bitterness towards the age with which he has identified him. Of such a satire no good can come. I cannot imagine that any reader of the *Annals* was ever morally the better for the perusal. Many perhaps have been made worse, confirmed, it may be, in a cynical contempt for mankind, or in a gloomy despair of virtue.

That of Juvenal diminishes.

Of the life of Juvenal, on the other hand, we know perhaps even less than of that of Tacitus. The traditions or fancies of the scholiasts and anonymous biographers seem to be wholly untrustworthy.[1] But if we may take the order in which the Satires are delivered to us as the actual order of their composition, we may derive from them a pleasing insight into the author's character. We may trace in him, with the advance of years, a fitting progress in gentleness and humanity. By comparing a few passages in his works, we may fix his birth in the year 59; the composition of his first Satire must have been after 100, but probably not long after, that

[1] The statements respecting Juvenal's life and fortunes in the pretended memoir of Suetonius, the notes of the ancient scholiast, and the brief reference of Sidonius Apollinaris, seem to be mere fancies. The cardinal date is that in *Sat.* xiii. 17., which professes to have been written sixty years after the consulship of Fonteius, the poet's birth year. Of three Fonteii consuls in the first century, I cannot doubt that C. Capito of the year 59 is here intended. I presume that the first and fourth Satires were written early in the reign of Trajan, the thirteenth in 119, at its close; nor does there seem any reason why the intervening pieces may not stand in the order of their composition. The fifteenth was also written under Hadrian, that is to say soon after the consulship of Junius, A. D. 119. See xv. 27.

of his fifteenth but little later than 119. Accordingly, Juvenal wrote from about his fortieth to his sixtieth year;* and if we compare the earlier with the later Satires, we find a change of style and sentiment aptly corresponding with this advance in age and experience. Thus we notice the fierceness and truculence more especially of the first, the second, the fifth and sixth, which are all aggressive onslaughts on the worst forms of Roman wickedness. The third, and still more the seventh, betray a tone of querulous disappointment, as of a man who had failed of the aim of his life, and finds himself, when past the middle age, outstripped by unworthy competitors, and neglected by the patrons on whom he had just or imagined claims. But in the eighth, the tenth, and the thirteenth, the nobility of his nature reasserts itself. He is no longer the mere assailant of vice, still less is he a murmurer against fortune; he seeks to exalt virtue, to expound the true dignity of human nature, to show to man the proper objects of ambition, to vindicate the goodness and justice of a divine Providence. The eleventh, twelfth, and fourteenth advance yet a step further in the course of a good man's life. They paint the charms of simplicity and virtue; they glorify contentment of mind and friendship; they set before us, with all an old man's gentleness, the reverence due to infancy and innocence. The subject of the fifteenth is a special one, and there is some poverty in the conception, some feebleness in the execution of it; nevertheless, it breathes the true spirit of humanity, and if we regard it as the last of the author's genuine compositions, it makes a worthy completion to a patriarch's mission. The satirist, whose aim is merely negative and destructive, who only pulls down the generous ideas of virtue with which youth embarks on its career, is simply an instrument of evil; and if his pictures of vice are too glowing, too true, the evil is so much

the greater; but if he pauses in his course to reconstruct, to raise again our hopes of virtue, and point our steps towards the goal of religion and morality, he may redeem the evil tenfold. The later satires of Juvenal more than compensate for the earlier. The reader who studies him with this clue to the service he has done mankind, will share, I doubt not, the reverential gratitude with which I am wont to regard him.

Tacitus and Juvenal eminent among the few remaining champions of Roman ideas.

Tacitus and Juvenal join in the same vigorous protest against the vices of their age, but their united protest against the encroachment of foreign ideas and sentiments, if less loudly and plainly expressed, is in fact not less vigorous. With these illustrious names closes the series of genuine Roman literature; of that spontaneous reflex of a nation's mind which represents its principles and traditions. The later writers in the Roman tongue, few, and for the most part trivial, as they are, must be regarded as imitators of a past from which they have become really dissevered, if they are anything more than mere compilers and antiquarians. But no Roman writers are more thoroughly conservative than these last of the Romans. In them we see the culmination of the Flavian reaction against the threatened disintegration of society which, checked more than once by Sulla and Augustus, had still advanced stealthily through three centuries. Tacitus and Juvenal are more wholly Roman than even Cicero or Virgil. They maintain the laws, the manners, the religion of their fathers with more decision than ever, as they feel more than ever how much protection is required for them. But if the old national ideas are thus held by some champions more strictly than ever, the sphere of their influence has no doubt become even narrower than of yore. Rome has dwindled, in this respect, into a provincial town in the centre of her

own empire. The ideas of Athens and Alexandria, of Palestine and Asia Minor, exert their sway all around her, and are gaining ground within her walls. The emperor and his senators, the remnant of the historic families of the city, are the only Romans in heart and feeling now left in the empire. Already the emperor has ceased to be a Roman by birth; he will soon be not even a Roman by descent; he will repudiate Roman principles with the scorn of ignorance, perhaps even of vanity; the divorce and sentiment between the emperor and his nobles will throw him more and more into the arms of the soldiery, and end, after many struggles, in his own renunciation of their religion and their home. But in order to understand the impending revolution, we must now turn our eyes towards the Eastern provinces, in which we shall again follow the footsteps of Trajan, the last years of whose reign were spent in great military and political combinations in that quarter.

CHAPTER LXV.

General expectation of a Deliverer favoured by Augustus and Vespasian.—Revival of Judaism after the fall of Jerusalem.—The schools of Tiberias.—Numbers of the Jews in the East.—Seditions raised and suppressed.—The Christians regarded with suspicion as a Jewish sect.—Alleged decrees of Nero and Domitian.—Persecution in Bithynia, and letters of Pliny and Trajan, A.D. 111, A.U. 864.—Martyrdom of Ignatius.—The Church, the Canon, and Episcopacy.—Trajan's expedition into the East, A.D. 114, A.U. 867.—Earthquake at Antioch, A.D. 115.—Annexation of Armenia.—Trajan's conquests beyond the Tigris.—Overthrow of the Parthian monarchy.—Trajan launches on the Persian Gulf. Is recalled by defections in his rear.—His ill success before Atra.—He returns to Antioch.—His illness and death at Selinus, A.D. 117, A.U. 870.—Revolt of the Jews in the East: in Cyprus, Cyrene, and Egypt. — Revolt in Palestine. — Akiba and Barcochebas, leaders of the Jews.—Suppression of the revolt.—Foundation of the colony of Ælia Capitolina —Final separation of the Christians from the Jews. (A.D. 111—133. A.U. 864—886.)

General expectations of a Deliverer favoured by Augustus and Vespasian.

AUGUSTUS and Vespasian, with their train of bards, augurs, and declaimers, might cling in hope or despair to the past, and strive to bind the wheels of human thought to the effete traditions of the Capitol.* Authority and Genius might perhaps combine to restrain the aspirations of faith and hope within certain limits of class and locality. But their influence, whatever the halo of glory with which it is encircled in our minds, was confined to a single spot and a small society. The waves of opinion and sentiment flowed on, free and uncontrolled, and the ideas of Rome, conqueror and mistress though she was, were left stranded on the shore. We have seen the wide diffusion of the Sibylline prophecies pointing towards a new advent or development, in the time of Augustus, and that emperor's efforts to compel the anticipations of mankind

to centre and terminate in himself. We have remarked the ready acquiescence of the Roman world in the hope that each succeeding emperor would be in truth its expected Preserver, and how willingly it ascribed divinity to the lords of the human race. The fair promise of Caius and Nero was hailed with insensate acclamations; but Vespasian, issuing from Judea and Egypt, seemed more literally to fulfil the presage derived from the Jewish oracles. The claim to miraculous powers, thrust on him even against his will, was doubtless the effect of a predetermination among his flatterers in the East to present him as the true Messiah, possibly with a desire of eclipsing the claims of the Messiah of the Gospel.[1] The leaders of popular movements among rude nations have at all times pretended to supernatural powers. Such were the claims of Athenio in Sicily, of Sertorius in Spain; yet we must be struck by the urgency with which such claims were advanced at this period by the chiefs of every people with whom the Romans contended, by the Jews, the Britons, the Gauls, and the Germans.[2] The earnestness on spiri-

[1] Champagny. *Rome et la Judée*, 499.: "Vespasien semble avoir été arrangé par les historiens pour être une contrefaçon du Christ. Jésus, réalisant la prophétie de Michée, est sorti de Bethléem pour devenir le roi pacifique de toutes les nations: Vespasien, à qui on applique cette même prophétie, sort de Judée pour être le dominateur pacifique d'un empire qui s'appelait le monde. Jésus fait des miracles; Vespasien en fera à son tour. Jusque-là, les prétendus miracles du paganisme se faisaient le plus souvent sous la main de l'homme; l'homme en était le témoin, l'interprète, le prôneur, le préparateur caché plutôt que l'agent direct et libre; ici il n'en sera plus ainsi: Jésus guérissait les infirmes, Vespasien se fera amener des infirmes. Le plus souvent, dans le paganisme, les guérisons prétendues merveilleuses s'opéraient dans un songe qui indiquait le remède au malade; aujourd'hui, c'est à un médecin surnaturel que le songe renverra le malade. Jésus guérissait un aveugle avec sa salive, Vespasien prétendra guérir un aveugle avec sa salive. Jésus a guéri un paralytique, Vespasien guérira un paralytique. La contrefaçon est évidente." I believe the remark to be a just one, and, if so, it shows how deep an impression the historical pretensions of Christianity had already made.

[2] The Druids in Britain waged a religious war against the Ro-

tual questions which marked the epoch before us was caused perhaps, in no slight degree, by the wide dispersion of the Jews, who displayed, amidst a world of fellow-subjects and exiles, a visible token of the sustaining power of faith or fanaticism. Nor can we doubt that the awakening of reason and conscience then apparent even in pagan societies, was also due, as in the corresponding circumstances of our own times, to the diffusion of peace, comfort and security, and to the interchange of sentiment which followed upon unrestricted commerce. Even the teachers of philosophy and religion were swayed by the same predominating influence. The first ages of Christianity were signalized by the rapid succession of prophets or wonder-workers, who assumed a sanction for their opinions in their immediate connexion, or actual identification, with the Deity. The Roman sword might still retain the keenness of its edge in the contests of the battle-field; but the narrow and simple faith of the Forum and the Capitol was powerless against the wit and logic, the eloquence and fanaticism, of the schools and synagogues.

Overthrow of the Jewish, and succession of the Christian dispensation.

These claims to divine powers and a divine mission became more frequent among the Jews after the fall of their holy city. Their morbid superstition received a strong impulse from the overthrow of their temple, the cessation of their most solemn rites, and the mutilation of their ceremonial system. Judaism was distinguished from the religions of Greece and Rome by its strictly local character. The service of Jupiter and Juno, Apollo and Hercules, had been carried by the pagan to the ends of the world, and the cult of the Acropolis or the Capitol was propagated with little variation from its metropolitan type through-

mans; Maricus the Gaul affected divine powers; the priestesses of the Germans, Aurinia, Ganna and Veleda, assumed the direction of the people as instinct with a spiritual authority.

out the colonies of Rome and Athens. But the ritual observances of Jewish worship were confined to one sacred spot: the priesthood, the sacrifices, the holy days, the outward tokens of the ancient covenant, pertained to the ceremonial of the Temple and to no other. The celebration of the Passover ceased with the destruction of the place in which the descendant of Aaron offered a propitiation once a year for the sins of the Jewish people. When the Temple was overthrown and the Temple-service abolished, the Mosaic law was reduced to a bare lifeless record, and the historic cult of Jehovah collapsed. The traditions of the Levitical system, which had survived so many revolutions, captivities, and oppressions, were retained henceforth in the recollection of private families only, in domestic observances, in fragmentary usages; they were no longer embodied in a public ritual, no longer guaranteed by a recognised succession of interpreters, nor maintained as the title-deeds of an authorized ministry. The continuity of the Jewish religion was sundered; the distinction of tribes and families was lost; the children of Eleazar and the descendants of Levi were mingled with the common herd; the genealogies so long preserved were lost in the common ruin, and the threads of descent could never be recovered. But, meanwhile, a recent offset from Judaism, the religion of Jesus the Messiah, was at hand to seize the vacant inheritance of divine protection, and to offer a new system, flourishing in the vigour of youth and hope, to the despairing votaries of the old. By many of the Jewish people in all parts of the world, this compensation was gratefully accepted as an unexpected deliverance; but the mass still turned from it with bitterer feelings than ever, and nursed their despair with more fanatical hatred both of the Romans and the Christians.

Whatever allowance we make for the exaggera-

Establishment of the Jewish schools at Tiberias.

tions of Josephus, it would seem that the massacres of the Jewish war, and the expatriation of its myriads of captives, had left Palestine in a state of desolation from which she was destined never thoroughly to recover. The artificial culture of her arid slopes, once interrupted, required a strong national spirit, nourished with youthful hopes and aspirations, to retrieve it. The province of Judea fell under the emperor's administration, and its tolls and tributes accrued to his private exchequer. Vespasian, frugal and provident by temper, felt an interest in the repartition of the vacant soil among a new tenantry; and under his superintendence measures were taken for repeopling the territory with fresh colonists. But Domitian was too reckless of the future, even in respect of his own private interests, to execute the plans bequeathed to him, and during his government the patrimony of the Jewish people was left, we may believe, for the most part, in the state to which the war had reduced it. On the hills of Zion and Moriah, indeed, and on other sites of their now ruined cities, the trembling fugitives gradually reassembled, and crouched among the ruins of their fallen palaces; but the habitations they here slowly raised more resembled the squalid villages of the Arabs amid the remains of Petra and Palmyra, than the seats of an established community. It was at Tiberias, on the banks of the celebrated lake which bore its name, that the remnant of the Jewish polity again took root for a season, under the direction of a new school of religious teaching. The priests of the Temple, and the Sanhedrim which had met in its holy courts, were here superseded by the doctors of the law, the rabbis, who interpreted the national Scriptures by the traditions of which they assumed to be the genuine depositaries. Year by year this audacious substitution of the gloss for the letter acquired form and consistency. The simple text of the

Law, for which the patriots of old had combated, was overlaid by the commentary of the Mischna, and at a still later period the text of the Mischna itself was, in like manner, overlaid by the commentary of the Gemara. The degrees of estimation in which these successive volumes came to be held among the degenerate descendants of Abraham and Moses were marked by the popular comparison which likened the Bible to water, the Mischna to wine, the Gemara to hypocras; or, again, the first to salt, the second to pepper, and the third to frankincense. He who studies the Scripture, it was said, does an indifferent action; he who devotes himself to the Mischna does a good action; but he who learns the Gemara deserves the most glorious of rewards.[1]

The Law, the Mischna, and the Gemara.

The sound in heart among the Jews were no doubt now rapidly absorbed into the gathering mass of Christian belief. The perpetuation of the national ideas was abandoned to the dregs and offscourings of the people, by whom they were thus travestied and degraded. The race which could feed to satiety on the gross fancies of the Talmud, after banqueting so long on the sublime inspiration of the Old Testament, deserved the long eclipse of reason and imagination which was about to envelope it. Nevertheless, the political spirit of the Jews still retained its fervid vitality, and continued to animate them to repeated outbreaks of insensate violence against the power with which it was hopeless to cope. Dispossessed of their ancestral seats, they accepted the doom of national dispersion, and migrated by preference to the regions where former swarms of their own race had already settled, both within and beyond the limits of the empire. Multitudes thus transplanted themselves to Egypt and

Dispersion of the Jews in the East.

[1] See the authorities in Champagny, *Rome et Judée*, p. 450. Comp. Salvador, ii. 480.

Cyprus, nor fewer perhaps to Mesopotamia, where they fell under the sway of the Parthian monarch. In Egypt, the chronic turbulence of the Jewish residents was increased by this influx from the old country, and attempts were made to engage the whole Jewish population of the African coast in a league against the Romans. Could they indeed be brought to act in concert, their numbers might render them truly formidable. Even before the sudden immigration which followed on the fall of Jerusalem, this flourishing community had often turned the scale in the contests of Alexandria and Cyrene.

Their numbers in Mesopotamia; their turbulence in Egypt, Cyprus, and Cyrene.

The promoters of the movements that ensued pretended, as usual, to a divine mission. In Alexandria a remnant of the Zealots, who had escaped from the slaughter of their countrymen, inflamed the minds of their compatriots with hopes of a special interference, and raised their fanaticism to the highest pitch. In vain did the more sober of the Jewish population protest against this superstitious frenzy; the apprehensions of the government were thoroughly aroused, and Lupus, the prefect of the province, required all the residents of Jewish origin to attest their disavowal of these seditious aspirations by a declaration of submission to Cæsar as their master. Such a vow of allegiance sufficed for their protection; but great numbers, impelled by a furious fanaticism, sternly refused to utter the words, and persisted in their refusal in the face of death and tortures. The courage of women, and even of children, in this extremity, were worthy of the heroic age of the nation.[1] But armed resistance was either not attempted or easily put down. The Jewish temple erected by the priest Onias at

Severe measures against the Jews in Egypt.

[1] Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* vii. 10. 1.: *πάσης γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτοὺς βασάνου καὶ λύμης τῶν σωμάτων ἐπινοηθείσης, ἐφ' ἓν τοῦτο μόνον, ὅπως αὐτῶν Καίσαρα δεσπότην ὁμολογήσωσιν, οὐδεὶς ἐνέδωκεν, οὐδ' ἐμέλλησεν εἰπεῖν.*

Heliopolis, with the sanction of the Ptolemies, during the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, the only temple throughout the world which was modelled after the pattern of the national sanctuary, and was intended to serve as a solitary substitute for it, was now turned, like the temple at Jerusalem, into a place of defence, and for a moment the senseless multitude offered defiance to their enemies. But the gates were opened at the first summons, and the government, with singular forbearance, was content with expelling the Jews from the spot, and forbidding them to meet there for worship.[1] Even the customary assembling in the synagogues was not apparently interdicted; the inquisition that followed was simply political, and the religion of the rebel race was not proscribed. So again at Cyrene, where a more violent outbreak occurred, the Romans still spared the Jewish worship. They perceived, with unusual sagacity, that it was easier to control the people if allowed to foster their mutual sectarian jealousies, than if united in heart and mind under a common persecution. At Cyrene a leader named Jonathan led his countrymen into the desert, with the promise of Divine protection, but the movement speedily ended in mutual charges and recriminations. Some of the chiefs of the sedition were sent to Rome by the governor Catullus, to answer for their turbulence, and seem to have there laid accusations against their countryman Josephus, which it required all his credit with Vespasian and Titus to baffle.[2] But at Rome the Jews were perhaps specially protected by the contempt into which they had fallen. They no longer occupied the high places of the city, courted by men and women of noble birth, cherished by one

Closing of the Jewish temple at Heliopolis.

Sedition of Jonathan at Cyrene, circ. A. D. 65.

[1] Joseph. *Antiq.* xx. 10. 3.; *Bell. Jud.* vii. 10. 3.

[2] Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* vii. 11. Jonathan was put to death by Vespasian. This is our nearest approximation to the date.

emperor and feared by another. They slunk from the public sight in the most miserable quarters, and scraped together a livelihood by the pettiest traffic. Their position in society is marked by the passing sneers of Martial and Juvenal.[1] Their unchangeable spirit of isolation, and the instinct with which they maintained their established customs, are shown even in the places they chose for sepulture, the lonely catacombs, which recalled to their imaginations the caves in which their fathers were buried.[2]

Among the most vicious features of the national character, and that which contributed above any other to unnerve the Jews in contest with their enemies, was their constant disposition to inflame their rulers against sects and parties among themselves, with which they had domestic differences. Their political enthusiasts, the Zealots and Sicarii, could postpone every desperate scheme of national resuscitation to get vengeance on the Moderates, or Herodians, of whom Josephus, as we have seen, was a conspicuous leader. In the same manner, their most devout religionists were ready at any moment to denounce to prefects and governors the pious followers of the Christ Jesus, and traduce them as intriguers against the public peace, and abandoned to the grossest impurities. The Romans, who had instituted strict inquiries respecting the expectations of a Deliverer so fondly cherished

Inquisition into the tenets of the Christians.

[1] Juvenal, iii. 14. foll., vi. 542. foll., xiv. 96. foll.; Martial, iv. 4., vii. 32, xi. 94. We have already noticed the ignorant contempt with which Tacitus had learnt to regard them.

[2] According to the most accredited theory at the present day, the catacombs at Rome were originally excavated or adopted by the Jews for their place of sepulture. Their feelings revolted against the Roman mode of burning the dead, and their old traditions would naturally suggest to them the disposal of their mortal remains in caves hewn in the rock. Jerusalem itself had been mined by passages and caverns, but these were used for reservoirs or magazines; it does not appear, I think, that they were appropriated to the purpose of sepulture. The Christians at Rome inherited the burying places of their predecessors in the faith of Palestine.

among the Jewish communities, and had specially prosecuted all who pretended to descent from David, were induced by these manœuvres to examine into the tenets of the Christians, so far as related to the person of Christ, the acknowledged founder of their sect; but failing to discover in him any political character, they were generally satisfied with requiring of his followers the same bare acknowledgment of the emperor's supremacy as of their Jewish compatriots. The formula which was proposed to the Jews, was probably identical with that set before the Christians. They were required, no doubt, *to call Cæsar master*. The immoralities alleged against them were disbelieved, or contemptuously disregarded. The traditions of the Church, which point to a general persecution of the believers in the Flavian period, cannot be lightly set aside, and to this extent they may safely be credited, though the assertion of a special decree issued by Nero, and enforced by his successors against them, seems too improbable to be admitted without stronger evidence. The historical traces of such a persecution even in Rome are faint and indecisive; yet, according to all analogy, it was only in Rome, or among Roman citizens in the provinces, that the central government would interfere to prohibit religious usages, however strange and technically illicit. Nor would a special law be required for the suppression of a dangerous or immoral usage in the provinces. There the prætor's edict would arm the magistrate with power against disturbers of peace and security; the general authority that magistrate brought from Rome entitled him to protect by his own decree the public tranquillity or decorum; and even if a certain worship was proscribed as illicit in the city, it might still rest practically in his discretion to permit or to prohibit it in his own province.[1]

Alleged decrees of Nero and Domitian.

[1] Even the Christian apologists, who assert the promulgation of a law against their sect by Nero, speak of the persecutions as occasional

Pliny's letter to Trajan respecting the Christians in Bithynia.

There remains, amidst the wreck of ancient documents, one distinct and most valuable record of the action of the government in this particular at a distance from the capital. Bithynia, the province referred to, and the adjacent parts of Asia, were at the time more leavened with Christian opinions than other districts of the empire. For in these regions the Jews, who had followed perhaps the Roman spoilers and tax-gatherers, and taken the land in mortgage for their loans, were especially numerous, and in these the preaching of the Apostles had been eminently successful; here also the old Pagan superstitions had been long undermined, and the soil was favourable for the growth of a new and vigorous shoot of spiritual life. The social and political ferment of the times manifested itself here above most places by yearnings for spiritual illumination. It was appointed, moreover, that the governor of Bithynia in the early years of Trajan should be neither one of the ordinary class of Roman prefects, indifferent alike to all religious manifestations, and indisposed to trouble himself with inquiries about them; nor, on the other hand, a sanguinary bigot, such as often drew the sword at once in fear or hatred, and looked to no other means of repressing odious opinions. The younger Pliny, of whom we have already heard so favourably, was vigilant and laborious, and his personal attachment to his master rendered him more than commonly anxious to put down any movements in his district which might seem prejudicial to the interests of the government. But he was at the same time kindly in disposition, a lover of justice, desirous of acting fairly and considerately. He made it a point of conscience to govern his province as a

and local. Such is the complaint of Quadratus under Hadrian: ὅτι δή τινες πονηροὶ ἄνδρες τοὺς ἡμετέρους ενοχλεῖν ἐπειρῶντο. Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* iv. 3.

philosopher, not as a mere soldier.[1] He was resolved to suppress all political enemies; but he was resolved to do so with temper and moderation. Hence his correspondence with Trajan, one of our most curious monuments of antiquity, contains the formal justification of his acts which he desired to leave on record. From these letters we learn all that can really be known of the methods of the Roman government in regard to the Christians.[2]

Pliny's proceedings against the Christians. A. D. 112.

Thus we find Pliny speaking of the Christians, at the commencement of the second century, as a well-known class, whose name requires no explanation, and of the law regarding them as sufficiently understood. When certain persons were brought before him, charged with *the crime of being Christians*, he simply demanded whether they were really such, and on their acknowledging the designation, and persisting a second and third time in the confession, he ordered them to be capitally punished.[3] If, however, they were Roman citizens, he sent them to Rome for trial. He consults the emperor whether this is the proper mode of proceeding, which, as he admits, seems rather to increase the number of the denounced,

[1] See the advice he gives to a friend who is about to undertake the government of Asia. *Ep.* viii. 24.

[2] The well-known letter of Pliny and the answer of Trajan are numbered x. 96, 97. in Gierig's edition, to which I have referred throughout (vulg. 97, 98.). Their date is fixed by Clinton to A. D. 104, A. U. 857: the seventh year of Trajan's reign; but see Greswell, *Suppl. Dissert.* p. 200. foll., where the chronology of Pliny's letters is arranged, and his proconsulship assigned to 111–113; the letter in question to 112. Mr. Greswell suggests the probability that Pliny, of whom we have no further mention, joined Trajan in the East, and perished in the earthquake at Antioch in 115. See below.

[3] Plin. *Epist.* x. 96. 3.: "Perseverantes duci jussi." He thinks it necessary to excuse this severity by the remark that, whatever might be the complexion of their opinions, the obstinacy of the persons who thus maintained them in defiance of the government, was in itself deserving of punishment. Roman citizens were sent to be dealt with in Rome.

and to fan the flame of perverse opposition to the law.[1] On the other hand, the measures he has taken of his own accord for checking the informers, and forbidding inquiry to be made into the profession of the obnoxious tenets, have been speedily attended with good effects: the temples have become more frequented, and there is a readier sale for beasts for sacrifice. Hence it appears that the mere profession of the name of Christian had been once ruled to be capital in this province; but the actual execution of the law lay in the governor's discretion, and he, if considerate and conscientious, or if the affair seemed to assume unusual importance, would refer the decision to the emperor himself.[2] The famous persecution of the Christians in Bithynia was, I believe, a temporary measure of precaution against disturbances apprehended by the local government from the spread of strange and suspected usages rather than doctrines, which seemed connected more or less closely with the disaffection of the Jews. The danger uppermost in Pliny's mind was that which might spring from a political combination.[3] The Christians and the Jews were subjected, as we have seen, to a similar inquisition, wherever their numbers rendered them objects

[1] "Mox ipso tractatu, ut fieri volet, diffundente se crimine, plures species inciderant," *l. c.* 4. Persons were accused, apparently from motives of private spite, who denied at once that they were or ever had been Christians, and sacrificed without hesitation before the images of the gods and of the emperor.

[2] The rescripts of the emperors addressed to the governors of particular provinces did not apply elsewhere unless specially provided. See Trajan to Pliny, *Epist.* x. 75.: "Quæstio quæ pertinet ad eos qui liberi nati, expositi, deinde sublati . . . . *sæpe tractata est*; nec quidquam invenitur in commentariis eorum principum qui ante me fuerunt, quod ad *omnes provincias* sit constitutum. Epistolæ sane sunt Domitiani ad Avidium . . . . quæ *fortasse* debent observari: sed inter eas provincias de quibus rescripsit non est Bithynia." Comp. *Epist.* x. 74. on the same subject: "Recitabatur edictum quod dicebatur D. Augusti ad Annium, et D. Vespasiani ad Lacedæmonios, et D. Titi ad eosdem, deinde ad Achæos," etc.

[3] Plin. *Epist.* x. 96. 7.: "Secundum mandata tua hetærias esse vetueram."

of jealousy. But if Jews or Christians could acquiesce in the form of homage to the emperor, neither one nor the other could offer the most trifling service to the idols of paganism.[1] With respect to both classes of recusants the government employed the harshest means to enforce submission, its barbarity increasing with the defiance it encountered. But here the parallel ends. All that can be said for the Jews even by their own co-religionists, in this cruel trial, is that they suffered with dauntless constancy, and bore a noble testimony to their faith. But upon the Christians, now at the threshold of their long career of manifold temptations, a far higher eulogium has been passed. Their witness is a political enemy, their judge is a pagan philosopher. Pliny allows that he can discover no crime, not even the crime of political disaffection, among them: their meetings, though conducted privately and before daylight, were completely innocent, and their bloodless ceremonial confined to singing hymns to the Founder of their faith as a Divine Being, and to binding themselves by a vow, ratified by a simple meal in common, not to rob, nor to cheat, nor to commit adultery.[2] So ancient and genuine a testimony to the virtue of the first believers, and to the peculiar graces of their life and conversation, is justly regarded as one of the proudest

His testimony to their virtues.

[1] Thus Pliny requires the Christians to sacrifice to the gods and the genius of the emperor: "Cum præeunte me Deos appellarent, et imagini tuæ, quam propter hoc jusseram cum simulacris numinum adferri, thure ac vino supplicarent." Plin. *l. c.* 5.

[2] Plin. *l. c.* 7.: "Adfirmabant autem hanc fuisse summam vel culpæ suæ, vel erroris, quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire carmenque Christo, quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem, seque sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum abnegarent," etc. All those merits, though freely acknowledged, weighed as nothing with so zealous a courtier, against the apparent disregard, not of the gods so much as of the emperor. Pliny flattered himself that his measures against these innocent meetings were effectual: "Quod ipsum facere desiisse post edictum meum."

monuments of our faith. The letter of Pliny, it has been well said, is the first *Apology for Christianity.*[1]

Nevertheless, this favourable testimony availed little to protect the Christians from the alarms of paganism. Trajan indeed, when solicited to determine how they should be treated, was satisfied with recommending mild measures in a tone of almost contemptuous liberality. He directed that the professors of the proscribed opinions should not be sought for, and that no encouragement should be given to the informers, who were generally Jews.[2] Still, however, if malefactors so bold and perverse should be brought before the tribunals, the majesty of the law required that they should be firmly and sternly dealt with. The courage or fanaticism exhibited by these sectarians inflamed the temper of their opponents, while even superstition might combine to exasperate the pagans against the new enemies, in whose zeal and purity they already read the doom of their hollow pretensions. The confident anticipations of a coming Deliverer, proclaimed from the Christian pulpits, seemed connected with the repeated threats of Nero's return from the Euphrates, and the intrigues of the Parthian court; while the recurring conflagrations of the City and the Capitol, the fatal eruption of Vesuvius, and renewed activity of its long dormant fires, pointed in the minds, not of the vulgar only, but of many intelligent thinkers, to a near fulfilment of the Chris-

The popular apprehension of their political intrigues.

Superstitious terrors of the people.

[1] Wallon, *Hist. de l'Esclavage dans l'Antiquité*, iii. 13.

[2] Plin. *Epist.* x. 97. Trajan carefully limits his decision to the particular case and locality: "Neque enim in universum aliquid, quod quasi certam formam habeat, constitui potest." He requires that all denunciations of Christians should be certified with the name of the informer: "Sine auctore vero propositi libelli nullo crimine locum habere debent. Nam et pessimi exempli nec nostri sæculi est." It is very remarkable that the emperor speaks of these people as if he had never heard of them before. It is difficult to suppose that he regarded them in any other light than as members of an illegal political club.

tian prophecy, that the world itself was about to be consumed in a final catastrophe.[1]

The earliest charge against the believers was that of perverse and antisocial usages, and a colour was given to their proscription by the want of legal toleration under which they technically laboured. But these frivolous imputations were reinforced by the fears of the multitude, who referred every calamity to the anger of the national divinities insulted by their pretended impiety. The tradition of the primitive Church, that Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch, was examined in that city by Trajan in person, and condemned by him to a martyr's death, coincides with the account of an earthquake by which the Eastern capital was almost destroyed during the emperor's residence in Syria. The date of the martyrdom itself is indeed a matter of doubt and controversy; and though the tradition can hardly be rejected, it must be acknowledged that the historical evidence for it is imperfect and conflicting.[2] The authorities unanimously refer the event to a period when it can be shown that Trajan was still in the West, and the account of the interview between the emperor and the bishop, on which so much of its interest depends, rests, it must be allowed,

Martyrdom of Ignatius, bishop of Antioch. A. D. 115.

[1] There is something startling in the modern tone of sentiment attested by Pliny in reference to the great eruption: "Multi ad Deos manus tollere, plures nusquam jam Deos ullos, *æternamque illam et novissimam noctem mundo* interpretantur." *Epist.* vi. 20. The appointed destruction of the world by fire was a tenet of the fashionable Stoicism of the day. Lucan, vii. 814.: "Communis mundo superest rogus." Senec. *Cons ad Marc.* 26.

[2] Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 36 ; S. Hieron. *de Viris Illustr.* 16. The first of these authorities fixes the date to the tenth year of Trajan, A. D. 107. The second to the eleventh, A. D. 108. The *Martyrium S. Ignatii* places it in the consulship of Sura and Senecio, *i. e.* A. D. 107. It is now generally agreed that Trajan did not go to the East earlier than 114 (see Francke. Clinton, and Greswell), and remained there till the time of his death in 117. The earthquake at Antioch occurred Jan. 115 (see below), during the consulship of Messala and Pedo, and the martyrdom must be assigned to December of the same year. *Martyr.* c. 6.

on suspicious testimony.[1] But, however this may be, the barbarity of the government in its proscription of opinion, and the meek endurance of the believers, are fully established on the unquestioned evidence of Pliny; and that the fanaticism of both people and rulers should be inflamed against them by the occurrence of great public calamities is only too congenial to the common course of human affairs.[2]

Development of the Christian society.

On ordinary occasions, however, as appears from Pliny's memorable despatches, the government showed some consideration for the unfortunate sectaries, and made an attempt to check promiscuous attacks upon them. Meanwhile other enemies, more bitter than the legitimate guardians of the state and the state-religion, were prompt in frustrating these merciful inclinations. As the Christians were themselves at first sectarians innovating on the national creed of Judaism till they were cast forth from its bosom, so there soon appeared within the pale of Christianity a strong disposition to discover fresh modifications of Christian doctrine, and provoke

[1] We need not enter into the question about the genuineness of the epistles ascribed to Ignatius. The authenticity of the *Martyrium*, or *Acta Martyrii*, is shaken by the apparent error in the date. The later Christian writers seem to have followed its chronology pretty closely, and so far may be considered to attest its antiquity. We are at a loss, however, to account for the bishop being sent to suffer martyrdom at Rome, and the narrative bears on its face a strong appearance of being moulded into a counterpart to the last voyage of St. Paul.

[2] The testimony of Hegesippus, the primitive historian of Christianity (cited by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 32.), to the martyrdom of Symeon, bishop of Jerusalem, under Trajan, is generally admitted. See Milman, *Hist. of Christianity*, ii. 150. It seems that the martyr was stated to be the second bishop of Jerusalem; James, who suffered A. D. 44, having been the first. He was also the son of Cleopas. He was prosecuted, according to the account, as one of the royal seed of David, a subject of inquisition, as we have seen, under Domitian. The martyrologists insisted upon making him a kinsman as well as a hearer of Christ, and asserted that he was a hundred and twenty years old at the time of his death. The year of the martyrdom is not specified, but it was in the prefecture of Atticus. It is not said that the emperor took cognisance of the case.

expulsion from the new community. The Church sought to convince the innovators alternately by argument and authority; and it is clear from her earliest traditions that she leant to the second of these means at least as readily as to the first. Her discipline was drawn closer by the stricter organization to which she was now subjected: the decision of questions of doctrine was brought to a more definite point by the formal ratification of a Canon of Scripture, and the interpretation of Holy Writ was referred to a tradition, the keys of which were lodged with her rulers, the bishops. The union of the true believers was maintained by the test of sacramental forms; and the Church assumed the proportions of a visible system, manifest to the world without, as well as known to its own members. The power of excommunication from this body, assigned to the bishops, was easily suffered to take the place of reasoning with people, against whose self-will and vanity reasoning would have little availed. The dying exhortations of Ignatius, purporting to be addressed to the various churches during his pilgrimage from the imperial tribunal to the amphitheatre, derive their force and interest from their reiterated admonitions to obey the bishop, and eschew doctrinal error by holding fast the traditions preserved by the Episcopate. It is clear that the almost open announcement of this social organization, this spiritual empire in the centre of the temporal, must have roused unbounded jealousy in a government which could hardly tolerate a committee to collect subscriptions for building an aqueduct. The heretics saw their advantage, and retorted on the orthodox by denouncing them to the government, and still more fatally by exciting the passions of the populace against them[1];

The Church, the Canon of Scripture, and Episcopacy.

[1] Pliny's account of the treatment of Christians is confirmed by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* iii. 33., with the addition that the informations against them were often laid by the heretics. For the history

for when the populace cried aloud in the theatres for any object of their capricious desires, the Roman governor was bound, by the prescriptions of ancient usage, to give it them. Hence the sanguinary character of the Roman policy towards the Christians even at this early stage, and the mixture with it of popular ferocity, so soon outrunning the tardier and more considerate pace at which the government was of itself disposed to move.[1]

The presence of Trajan in the East demanded by the state of affairs.

The Eastern provinces, at this juncture, might well require the presence of the emperor in person. A new, an increasing, and apparently a dangerous, society was striking root, and spreading its branches abroad beyond the Ægean. Its members, while professing outward obedience to the government, avoided public offices, secluded themselves from the mass of the people, held and disseminated opinions of doubtful import, in which the majesty of Cæsar, as well as the deity of Jupiter, was secretly despised, if not openly abjured. On the one hand there was the peril of combination, —for the Christians were even more closely united than the Jews;—on the other, there was the peril of enthusiasm, ever hateful and suspicious to a centralized machine of administration. From city to city, and in the less conspicuous recesses of the country-villages, sophists and hierophants, conjurors and wonder-workers, moved by stealth or openly, and sowed the elements of discontent and disturbance.

of these persecutions he refers, besides Pliny, to Tertullian, and evidently has the *Martyrium Ignatii*, and some of the epistles of Ignatius, before him. For the martyrdom of Symeon bishop of Jerusalem he refers to Hegesippus.

[1] Mosheim puts this habitual policy in a clear light in speaking on this subject: *de Rebus Christ.* sæc. ii. c. xi. note: "Sociatæ plebis postulationes rejicere præsides non audebant, ne seditioni locum facerent: deinde veteri Romanorum jure sive consuetudine sic comparatum erat . . . . ut plebs quoties ad ludos publicos . . . . conveniret, ab Imperatore ac præsidibus quæ vellet petere posset: quæ petitiones repudiari nullo modo poterant."

The Jews had repeatedly proved themselves the most obstinate opponents of the Cæsars, and they were even now plainly intent on forming fresh combinations: the Christians appeared to share the obstinacy of the Jews, while they inflamed it with a new and still more fervent fanaticism. In the background of this fermenting mass lay the formidable power of the Parthians, ever ready to harbour exiles, to encourage malcontents, and to plot against the interests of the empire. To encounter the overt, to bring to light the hidden dangers of the time, the staff of proconsuls and procurators, even when supported by the legions, was insufficient. The crisis demanded the august presence and complete authority of the master of both the soldiers and the people of Rome.

Interference of the Parthians with Armenia.

It was not, accordingly, we may believe, from mere restless love of enterprise, nor from the ambition so often present to the mind of Roman commanders, of rivalling the great Eastern conquerors, but from a conviction of the importance of the crisis to the welfare of the empire, that Trajan relinquished the ease he had earned by his Dacian exploits, and plunged again, towards the close of his career, into the feverish excitement of a great national struggle. But the ostensible motive of the war on which he now entered was the interference of the Parthians with the affairs of Armenia. Vologesus, as we have seen, had accepted the terms imposed on him by Nero, and had been perhaps too deeply impressed with the power and magnificence he had witnessed at Rome to venture to tamper with them. Tiridates, king of Armenia, continued to hold his crown in acknowledged dependence on the empire of the West. When, however, the succession to the Roman purple was in dispute, Pacorus II., the son and successor of Vologesus, did not scruple to take open part with a pretender to the Armenian throne. The object, indeed, of his favour proved unsuccessful.

Vespasian, though compelled to dissemble while his own fortunes were in the balance, was jealous and angry. By the time that he had established his power he had become weary of fighting; nor, indeed, was the position of affairs at home favourable to an arduous and expensive struggle. Titus reposed on his Judean laurels, and could afford to overlook the slight. Domitian, in his turn, regarded with the apathy of a feeble understanding the insults of so distant a rival. Pacorus was emboldened by impunity, and carried, it was said, his defiance so far as to form relations with Decebalus, gathering up the threads of alliance which had connected Mithridates of old with the barbarian chiefs beyond the Tanais and Borysthenes. He seems, however, to have stood in awe of the martial character of Trajan, and to have refrained from sending aid to the Dacian prince on the Danube, and from effecting a diversion in his favour by an attack on the side of the Euphrates. His movements were confined to redoubled efforts for the extension of the Parthian influence over Armenia. After the death of Pacorus his brother Chosroes pursued the same policy, and ventured to recommend a son of the deceased king of Parthia, named Exedares, to fill the vacant throne of Tiridates. But Trajan had now completed the subjugation of Dacia, and was at leisure to demand reparation for this insult. Armenia, he declared, was the vassal of Rome, not of Parthia. She must accept her kings from the master of the legions which had so often sprung from the Euphrates to the Araxes, and given proof of their power to annex, if so it pleased their leaders, the whole realm to the empire. Chosroes was alarmed at the menaces addressed to him, and still more at the promptitude with which his opponent rushed towards the scene of action. He sent envoys to meet Trajan at Athens, and assured him that he had already compelled Exedares, whom he

Resisted by Trajan. A. D. 114.

represented as equally faithless to both powers, to descend from the throne. At the same time, however, he presumed, it seems, to suggest the substitution of Parthamasiris, another son of Pacorus, for the unworthy Exedares, only asking the Roman emperor to invest him with the diadem, instead of bestowing it himself. It appeared, however, that Trajan had other ends in view than to settle a matter of ceremonial with the king of Parthia. He was resolved to establish the supremacy of Rome throughout the East, by some notable exploits, and, old though he now was, he would not suffer his plans to be frustrated by a premature accommodation.[1] He rejected the presents with which Chosroes had accompanied his overtures, and deigned to make no other reply to his proposals but that the friendship of princes should be estimated by deeds, rather than by words, and that, when he arrived himself in Syria, he would act as befitted the occasion. With these ominous words he dismissed the courtiers of Chosroes, and continued his progress through Asia and Cilicia, till he finally arrived, towards the close of the year 114, at the headquarters of the Roman government in Antioch.[2]

Trajan arrives at Antioch.

While awaiting the season for military movements, restoring the strictness of military discipline, and superintending the details of the civil administration of the East, a calamity occurred which might have daunted the courage of a less resolute ruler. It was in the course of this same winter, early in the year 115, according to the most exact chronology, that the splendid capital of Syria was visited by an earthquake, one of the most disastrous

Earthquake at Antioch.

[1] The age of Trajan in 114 was sixty-two years. Julian, *Cæs.* p. 328 A, refers to his advanced age: *πρὸς Παρθυαίους πρὶν μὲν ἀδικεῖσθαι παρ' αὐτῶν οὐκ ᾠόμην δεῖν χρῆσθαι τοῖς ὅπλοις· ἀδικοῦσι δὲ ἐπεξῆλθον, οὐδὲν ὑπὸ τῆς ἡλικίας κωλυθείς· καίτοι διδόντων μοι τῶν νόμων τὸ μὴ στρατεύεσθαι.*

[2] Dion, lxviii. 17.; Francke, *Gesch. Traj.* p. 261. foll.; Clinton, *Fast. Rom.*

apparently of all the similar inflictions from which that luckless city has periodically suffered. The commotion of the elements, the overthrow of edifices, and destruction of multitudes of people in the ruins, are described with great emphasis by Dion, who adds, that the calamity was enhanced by the presence of unusual crowds from all the cities of the East, assembled to pay homage to the emperor, or to take part in his expedition. Among the victims were many Romans of distinction, including Pedo, one of the consuls for the year, who had just entered on his office. Trajan himself only escaped by creeping through a window, with the assistance of a man of gigantic stature, who was evidently supposed to have been some divine protector. The population were compelled to encamp, in that inclement season, in the Circus, while Mount Casius, the lofty eminence which towers above the city, and seems almost to impend over it, appeared, to their excited imaginations, to be shaken by the violence of the repeated shocks, and trembled as if about to fall and overwhelm the remnants of the ruin.[1]

The events of Trajan's expedition into the East, the most brilliant in the extent and rapidity of its conquests of any exploit of the Roman arms, though

[1] Dion, lxviii. 25. The earthquake at Antioch is reckoned by Orosius, along with other calamities of the same nature, as a divine judgment on the persecution of the Christians. "Terræ motu quatuor urbes Asiæ subversæ . . . . et Græcorum civitates duo . . . . Tres Galatiæ civitates eodem terræ motu dirutæ . . . . Pantheon Romæ fulmine concrematum." We can easily suppose that the Christians were conscious that the persecutions they now suffered were connected with these portentous disasters. The Pagans, on the other hand, were deeply impressed with them, as judgments requiring peculiar methods of expiation. Thus the survivors at Antioch erected a temple in their beautiful suburb of Daphne to Zeus the Saviour. Francke, *Gesch. Traj.* p. 268., from Malelas and Eustathius. A fresh outbreak of the Jews in Egypt and Cyrene at this juncture may perhaps be also referred to the excitement which followed on the catastrophe at Antioch. See Oros. *l. c.*; Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 2.

doomed to ominous obscuration at its close, may be divided, brief as was the interval it embraced, into two portions. The first of these includes, as the work of a few months only, the annexation of Armenia to the Roman dominions, and the consolidation of the Roman power throughout the regions between the Euxine and the Caspian, the Euphrates and the Caucasus. Our authorities, indeed, are here confused and fragmentary, and it is only as a choice of difficulties that we accept the arrangement and chronology which seem best accredited. The commencement of the year 115 was no doubt occupied with preparations for a great military progress, and the emperor's advance must have been retarded by the disaster at Antioch. But the legionaries, whose habits of endurance had been relaxed under the enervating climate of Syria, required to be guided with a strong hand, and Trajan did not hesitate to keep the field through the summer heats.[1] As he advanced from the Syrian capital to the Armenian frontier, he received the petty princes of the regions on his route, and accepted their homage and their gifts with the air of an Oriental potentate. Ascending the stream of the Euphrates from the Roman outpost at Zeugma, he occupied the passages of that river at Samosata and Elegia; and here, on the frontier of the Greater Armenia, he awaited the arrival of Parthamasiris, whom he had summoned to attend him.[2] The pretender to the throne of Armenia

Trajan's expedition into Armenia.

[1] The indiscipline of the Syrian legions and the vigorous measures of Trajan are painted in strong colours by Fronto, *Princip. Hist.* in *Opp. Ined.* ii. 340.: "Corruptissimi vero omnium Syriatici milites, seditiosi, contumaces, apud signa infrequentes . . . Tantam militaris disciplinæ labem coercuit, industria sua ad militandum exemplo proposita," etc.

[2] Some of our geographers suppose the existence of two places of the name of Elegia, one corresponding to a modern Ilidjeh, the other to Iz-Oghlu. I find the latter only in Kiepert's elaborate map of Asia Minor, placed on the right or Roman bank of the Euphrates, just above the spot where the river falls into the defiles of the

affected independence, and instead of appearing in person, took the liberty of sending envoys to confer with the rival chieftain. Trajan refused to admit the vassals of a vassal into his presence, and Parthamasiris, now thoroughly alarmed, was compelled to repair himself to the Roman quarters. The Parthian, however, though no match for a Roman enemy in the field, was a bold and magnanimous adversary. He advanced gallantly, with a small retinue, to the emperor's tribunal in the centre of the camp. Taking the diadem from his own brows he laid it at Trajan's feet; then, drawing himself up, he stood in dignified silence, expecting that this mute submission would be accepted in place of humiliating declarations, and that the emblem of sovereignty would be returned to him. But at the sight of this expressive act of homage from the son of the once terrible Pacorus, the whole army raised a shout and loudly saluted Trajan as Imperator, and victor of a bloodless field. The Parthian was startled by this sudden tumult, and apprehended danger to his person. Turning about to retire, he found himself surrounded and retreat intercepted. He once more confronted the emperor, and demanded a private interview, that any degrading concessions required of him might at least be made out of the sight both of his friends and his enemies. He was then led, courteously as it would seem in the first instance, into the prætorium; but the terms he of-

Dignified behaviour of Parthamasiris, the Parthian claimant to the throne.

Taurus, as Samosata stands just below them. Perhaps this spot is more strictly in Cappadocia than in the Lesser Armenia, which are commonly represented as separated by the stream of the Tokhmah-Sír; but on this matter we have no precise information. In Dion, lxxi. 2, a Roman force is said to be cut to pieces, A. D. 162, by the Parthians at Elegia in Armenia; and this Elegia can only be the frontier station on the Euphrates, as Armenia Major, which was annexed to the empire in 116, was relinquished a few years later, and no Roman force would be quartered within it. I am inclined, therefore, to believe in only one Elegia.

fered were not sufficient. Trajan used no forbearance to the rival now in his power. He would be satisfied with no less than the cession of his country, and even this capitulation must be accompanied with galling indignities. The emperor again ascended his tribunal, and Parthamasiris, frustrated in a second attempt to escape, was now led as a captive before him, and required to pronounce his submission in public, that no false account of the circumstances might be suffered to transpire. The Parthian, in this extremity, maintained his self-possession. He proudly affirmed that he was neither captured nor conquered; but had come of his own accord, as Tiridates had come to Nero, to confer on equal terms with a generous rival. Trajan curtly replied, with the effrontery of a Paullus or a Pompeius, that Armenia was a Roman dependency, and that he would give its crown to none, but would place it under a governor from Rome. Parthamasiris and his countrymen were then directed to leave the camp, but a Roman squadron was given him as an escort, to prevent his communicating with the native chiefs on his route homewards. His Armenian attendants were, however, detained; for they were now pronounced to be Roman subjects, and to owe no allegiance to the foreign intruder.[1]

Treacherous slaughter of Parthamasiris.

Even from Dion's account, which has been thus repeated, meagre as it is, we are led to apprehend that Trajan's conduct was marked with a contemptuous disregard of the treatment due to a fair and open enemy. From the casual expression, indeed, of an obscure writer, it has been long inferred that Parthamasiris actually perished[2];

[1] Dion, lxviii. 18–20.

[2] Eutrop. viii. 3.: "Parthamasire occiso," to which we may now add the supplemental testimony of Cornelius Fronto (*Princip. Hist.* p. 349.): "Trajano cædes Parthamasiris regis supplicis haud satis excusata; tametsi ultro ille vim cæptans, tumultu orto, merito interfectus est, meliore tamen Romanorum fama impune supplex abisset, quam jure supplicium luisset."

and the fragments of a contemporary history lately discovered, leave no doubt of the fact, that the dismissal of Parthamasiris was only a feint, and that the emperor took care to have him again arrested, and when he resisted and flew to arms, caused him to be brutally slain. While in many respects the public morality of the Romans was purified by their long civilization, it must be acknowledged that in the treatment of their foes they had made little advance either in clemency or good faith. But this sharp and sudden blow was successful. Parthamasiris may have had no firm footing in the country over which he had usurped dominion. The Armenians, finding that they had no choice but between submission to Rome or to Parthia, may have preferred the rule of a proconsul to that of a satrap. At all events, they yielded without a blow. The Greater and the Lesser Armenia were now, for the first time, annexed to the empire, and reduced to the form of a province. The Roman standards were planted on the shores of the Caspian. Araxes chafed in vain against the piers of a Roman bridge. While these arrangements were in progress the conqueror turned northward, and reached the hill-station of Satala on the Lycus, which commanded the road into the wild districts on the eastern shores of the Euxine. Here he received the homage of the Heniochi, and gave a king to the Albani. Here he graciously accepted the alliance of the Iberi, the Sauromatæ, and the tribes of the Cimmerian Bosphorus. He might hope, perhaps, to close the sources of the perennial stream of nomade savagery which ever broke against the frontiers of his Dacian provinces. But the Romans were pleased to hear once more the names of clients and tributaries over whom their great Pompeius had triumphed in the good old days of conquest; and they exclaimed with exulta-

Both the Armenias annexed to the Roman empire.

tion, that under the bravest of her emperors, Rome again *squared at the world.*[1]

Further acquisitions in Mesopotamia.

The subsequent exploits of Trajan were compressed within a very short space of time, and we are led to suppose that before the close of this eventful year, he launched his victorious legions against the centre of the Parthian power. The direction of his march may be traced perhaps by the titles of the princes whose submission he successively received. At the head of these was Abgarus, king of Edessa, at the first stage on the road which crossed Mesopotamia from Zeugma to Nineveh. The next in order was Sporaces, phylarch, as he is called, of Anthemusia, a town of Macedonian origin on the river Chaboras. His route then was the same which had proved fatal to Crassus; but Trajan was an abler captain than the luckless triumvir, and he was more fortunate, also, in having a less able enemy to contend with. The Parthian kings, though still bold in language and haughty in their pretensions, were at this time broken in power; the spirit of their nation was well nigh exhausted, and their realm was ready to fall a prey to any resolute assailant. Trajan, indeed, won his way by intrigue as much as by the power of his arms. His interview with the young son of Abgarus, in which he affected to pull the prince playfully by the ears, exemplifies the trivialities to which a victorious emperor would descend, when it was more convenient to deceive than to threaten his victim. The dominions of these petty chiefs were not less surely absorbed in the new provinces which the

[1] Thus I venture to translate the pugilistic metaphor of Rufus, *Breviar.* c. 21.: "movit lacertos." Eutrop. *l. c.*: "Armeniam . . . recepit. Albanis regem dedit. Iberorum regem et Sauromatorum et Bosporanorum, Osdroenorum et Colchorum in fidem recepit. Carduenos et Marcomedos occupavit." Comp. Plin. *Epist.* x. 13–15. The occupation of Satala is mentioned by Dion, lxviii. 19., but the order of events is, as I have said, much confused in this writer's remains.

invader added to his empire. From thence, taking advantage of the feuds subsisting between the Parthian Chosroes and his vassals, Mannus and Manisarus, the invader pushed on to Singara, took Nisibis, bridged the Tigris, and in spite of the desultory resistance of the mountain tribes (for the Parthian king seems to have led no army to oppose him), planted himself firmly in the region of Adiabene.[1] The resistance of the Parthians was paralysed by intestine divisions; the Romans marched triumphantly from station to station; and before the end of the year Trajan had created the new province of Assyria, stretching beyond the Tigris to the mountain ridge of Choatres and Zagrus, and including the modern Kurdistan. The title of Parthicus was well bestowed on the achiever of so splendid a conquest, who had thus won for the City of the West the sites of Alexander's greatest victories, Arbela and Gaugamela.[2]

Trajan crosses the Tigris and creates new province of Assyria.

Trajan passed the ensuing winter at Nisibis or Edessa. His ardent soul, still glowing beneath the weight of years, was inflamed with the prospect of easy and unlimited conquests in remotest Asia. From the Euphrates to the Indus, all the tribes of the far East were fluttering with the anticipation of his descent upon them.[3] Vast preparations were made,

Trajan descends the Euphrates, takes Ctesiphon, and subdues the Parthians. A. D. 116. A. U. 869.

[1] Dion, lxviii. 26.: ὑπὸ τὸ ἔαρ ὑπήχθη. I can hardly reconcile this mark of time with the circumstances detailed, whether we suppose the passage of the Tigris to take place in 115 or 116. I have supposed in the text that this was the termination of the campaign of 115, and that Trajan descended the Tigris or the Euphrates in the spring of the following year.

[2] The title of Parthicus does not appear on Trajan's medals in this year (115); but some time must be allowed for the news of his last exploits to reach Rome. On the conquest of Ctesiphon, in the ensuing year, the army is said to *confirm* the title, as though it had been already given. Dion, lxviii. 28.: τὴν ἐπίκλησιν τοῦ Παρθικοῦ ἐβεβαιώσατο.

[3] Victor, *de Cæsar.* 13.: "Ad ortum Solis cunctæ gentes quæ inter Indum et Euphratem sunt bello concussæ."

and a mighty armament was wafted in the spring of 116 down the Euphrates, and the flotilla itself transported by simple machinery across the neck of land which separates the Euphrates from the Tigris, in order to arrive at Ctesiphon.[1] This great city, the residence of the Parthian sultans, at once opened its gates; the army saluted their chief as Imperator, and confirmed the title of Parthicus. The independence of the great monarchy, once Rome's only rival, seemed for a moment extinguished. The king fled into the interior of Media, but the Roman forces under Trajan's lieutenants pursued him as far as Susa, and there captured his daughter and his golden throne. Leaving to Lusius Quietus, to Julius Alexander, and to Erucius Clarus the complete reduction of these regions, and more particularly of Seleucia on the Tigris, a city whose Grecian liberties even the Parthian monarchs had respected, Trajan descended in person the stream of the now united rivers, and launched his bark on the Persian Gulf. His restless imagination was not yet satisfied. He could not repress the puerile ambition of emulating the first European conqueror of the East, and leading his legions to the ocean on which the triremes of Alexander had floated. Seeing a vessel laden for India, and about to sail, he exclaimed, *Were I yet young, I would not stop till I too had reached the limits of the Macedonian conquest.*[2] But the hand of fate was already upon him,

Trajan launches on the Persian Gulf.

[1] Dion, lxviii. 28.: *ὑπερενεγκὼν τὰ πλοῖα ὁλκοῖς*, *i. e.* on rollers covered with greased skins. Comp. Hor. *Od.* i. 4. 2. The canals which formerly led from the Euphrates to the Tigris had silted up under the negligent government of the Parthians, and the Euphrates constantly overflowing its banks had converted these once fertile tracts into a morass. It is true, as Dion remarks, that the bed of this river is higher in its mid course than that of the Tigris; but by skilful engineering, a portion of the higher stream had formerly been conveyed safely into the lower. Comp. Arrian. *Anab. Alex.* vii. 7.

[2] Dion, lxviii. 28.; Eutrop viii. 2.; Julian, *Cæs.* p. 22.: *ἐπεδείκνυεν αὐτοῖς τό τε Γετικὸν καὶ τὸ Παρθικὸν τρόπαιον· ᾐτιᾶτο δὲ τὸ γῆρας,*

and had he really breathed so wild an aspiration, the circumstances of the realm he had left behind him must have speedily dispelled his delusions. After a few skirmishes with the tribes on the coast, the news of defections in his rear caused him hastily to retrace his steps. Seleucia, after her first submission, encouraged perhaps by his absence, had broken out in rebellion, and overpowered a Roman army. The city was stormed by Clarus and Alexander, and according to the historians burnt to the ground; but this, there is reason to believe, is a gross exaggeration. Trajan, however, was undeceived. He confessed that the complete annexation of these distant regions to the empire was impossible, and he proceeded to set up a puppet of his own, a Parthian of royal blood, named Parthamaspates, to perpetuate, under Roman control, the national existence. Repairing to Ctesiphon, he assembled the people in the presence of his army, and calling the new candidate before him, placed the diadem on his head, with a magniloquent harangue on the splendour of his own achievements.[1]

Defections in his rear.

He consents to restore a nominal sovereignty of Parthia.

The year 116 closed with this pretended settlement of Parthian affairs; but troubles were gathering about the conqueror's path, and his own energies were beginning, perhaps, to fail. The last exploit of Trajan was not a movement in advance, or the opening of another vista of triumphs, but an attempt, not wholly successful, to quell the defection of revolted subjects. The little fastness of Atra, the modern El

ὡς οὐκ ἐπιτρέψαν αὐτῷ τοῖς Παρθικοῖς πράγμασιν ἐπεξελθεῖν. Francke, *Gesch. Trajans*, p. 289. This writer places Trajan's visit to the Persian Gulf in 117. If this could be admitted, the descent of the Euphrates might be assigned to the spring of 116; but it seems to me not to allow time enough for the return to Ctesiphon and transactions there previous to the journey homeward. See below. In either case there is no pretence for the assumption of some moderns, that Trajan launched upon the Arabian ocean.

[1] Dion, lxviii. 27-30. The progress and successes of Trajan may be traced on his existing medals. See Eckhel and Francke, &c.

Hadr, on the road from Ctesiphon to Singara, though contemptible in itself, was rendered formidable by the nature of the country in which it stood, a desert almost destitute of water, affording neither food for men nor fodder for horses. The natives consecrated this city to the Sun, and the fierce rays of that potent luminary striking on a dry and sandy soil, furnished a better defence than armies or fortifications. Trajan could approach the place only with a small body of soldiers, and though he succeeded in breaching the walls, he was unable to penetrate them, and in succouring his baffled cohorts he was himself struck by an arrow. A thunderstorm with rain and hail added to the confusion of the Romans; but it served at least to cover their retreat. Their food and drink were poisoned with swarms of noxious insects, and the chief was at length compelled to retire before the last and least formidable of his opponents.[1]

General revolt of the Jews throughout the East. A. D. 117. A. U. 870.

Even under the command of Trajan, that gallant captain, an army with its legate had been cut in pieces, and the victorious emperor's return was neither unmolested nor bloodless.[2] Such is the testimony of Fronto, no favourable witness perhaps, to the disasters which clouded the termination of the Parthian campaigns. Trajan was now anxious to make his way to Rome. He still flattered himself that he had effected permanent conquests, and that the realms of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria beyond the Tigris would

[1] Dion, lxviii. 31. The position of Atra or Atræ is fixed by the statement of Steph. Byzant. (ex. Arrian. xvii. *Parthic.*). Ἄτραι πόλις μεταξὺ Εὐφράτου καὶ Τίγρητος. Francke, p. 293.

[2] Fronto, *Princip. Hist.* p. 338.: "Sed etiam fortissimi imperatoris ductu legatus cum exercitu cæsus, et principis ad triumphum decedentis haudquaquam secura nec incruenta regressio." It will be understood that Fronto, writing under Trajan's successor, is not indisposed to point out the circumstances which detract from the great conqueror's unrivalled merits.

continue, under the control of his lieutenants, a lasting trophy of the Roman Terminus.[1] But his own weakness was no doubt sensibly increasing. He had not provided for the succession, and with his habitual deference to the senate, he might shrink from the odium of making an appointment except in their presence, or with their concurrence. Meanwhile, within the borders of the empire, sympathetic movements of revolt responded pulse by pulse to the death spasms of Armenia and of Parthia. The Jewish insurrection, so long impending, had burst forth in several quarters. The fall of Antioch was perhaps a signal for a final appeal to the Deliverer of Israel.[2] Once more the children of Moses and David believed that heaven had declared for them by outward tokens, and that their long-destined triumph was at hand. The Jewish population of Palestine and Syria had not yet recovered from its exhaustion, but the number of this people was very considerable in Cyprus, lying over against Antioch, where Augustus had granted to the first Herod the privilege of working the copper mines, whence the island derived its

[1] Rufus, *Breviar.* 14.: "Ad extremum sub Trajano principe regi majoris Armeniæ diadema sublatum est, et per Trajanum Armenia, Mesopotamia, Assyria et Arabia provinciæ factæ sunt." Eutrop. viii. 3.: "Seleuciam et Ctesiphontem, Babylonem et Messenios, vicit ac tenuit: usque ad Indiæ fines et mare rubrum accessit: atque ibi tres provincias fecit, Armeniam, Assyriam, Mesopotamiam." Tac. *Ann.* i. 61.: "Rom. Imp. quod nunc ad mare rubrum patescit," *i. e.* the Persian Gulf.

[2] Orosius sums up the great features of this wide-spread insurrection in a few vehement sentences: "Incredibili deinde motu sub uno tempore Judæi, quasi rabie efferati, per diversas terrarum partes exarserunt. Nam et per totam Libyam adversus incolas atrocissima bella gesserunt: quæ adeo tunc interfectis cultoribus desolata est, ut nisi postea Hadrianus imperator collectas aliunde colonias illuc deduxisset, vacua penitus terra, abraso habitatore, mansisset. Ægyptum vero totam at Cyrenen et Thebaida cruentis seditionibus turbaverant. In Alexandria autem commisso prælio victi et attriti sunt. In Mesopotamia quoque rebellantibus jussu Imperatoris bellum illatum est. Itaque multa millia eorum vasta cæde deleta sunt. Salaminem sane, urbem Cypri, interfectis omnibus incolis deleverunt." Oros. vii. 12.

name. This rich and pleasant territory had afforded a refuge to the Jews of the continent through three generations of disturbance and alarm, and the Hebrew race was now probably not inferior there in number to the native Syrians or Greeks. On the first outburst of a Jewish revolt, the whole island fell into the hands of the insurgents, and became an arsenal and a rallying point for the insurrection, which soon spread over Egypt, Cyrene and Mesopotamia. The leader of the revolt in Cyprus bore the name of Artemion, but we know no particulars of the war in this quarter, except that 240,000 of the native population are said to have fallen victims to the exterminating fury of the insurgents. When the rebellion was at last extinguished in blood, the Jews were forbidden thenceforth to set foot on the island, and even if driven thither by stress of weather the penalty of death was mercilessly enforced against them.[1]

Sanguinary outbreak in Cyprus.

Throughout Mesopotamia the movements of disaffection to the Roman conquest were connected with this Jewish outbreak. Lusius Quietus, the best of Trajan's generals, charged with the task of completing the reduction of the new province, was especially enjoined to clear it of this element of perpetual resistance.[2] On the coast of Libya the contest assumed a still more formidable character. The Jewish population of the Cyrenaica outnumbered the natives, and the fanaticism which had been aroused by the pretended mission of Jonathan was fanned into a fiercer flame by a chief, who seems to have borne the double name of Andreas Lucullus.[3] Here

Jewish revolt in the Cyrenaica.

[1] Dion, lxviii. 32. The historian's father was governor of Cyprus, which was attached to the province of Cilicia, and the statement in the text seems to have been derived from special sources.

[2] Dion, lxviii. 33.; Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 2.: *ὁ δὲ αὐτοκράτωρ ὑποπτεύσας καὶ τοὺς ἐν Μεσοποταμίᾳ Ἰουδαίους ἐπιθησέσθαι τοῖς αὐτόθι, Λουκίῳ Κυήτῳ προσέταξεν ἐκκαθᾶραι τῆς ἐπαρχίας αὐτούς.*

[3] Dion calls him "Andreas," and Eusebius "Lucuas," which may be rendered by "Lucullus."

the insurgents were for a time triumphant, and disgraced their success by the cruelties they committed on the surprised and overpowered Cyrenians; for the hostility of the Jews in these parts was directed less against the central government and the Roman residents, than the native race with whom they always dwelt in habits of mutual animosity; of these 220,000 are said to have perished, many of them in torments inflicted with cannibal ferocity. After every allowance for the exaggeration usual in such cases, there seems no reason to question the general truth of these charges against the insurgents, and in as far as their barbarity was wreaked on the natives rather than on the Romans, the excuse of despair, and even of revenge, has no place. From Cyrene the flame quickly spread to Egypt. The prefect Lupus was worsted in several encounters, and shut up within the walls of Alexandria, where, however, he indemnified himself for his losses by the massacre of the Jewish residents. His position was still precarious, when Martius Turbo came from Trajan to the rescue, and the frantic resistance of the rebels was at last overcome after a protracted resistance, and in a series of engagements. The historian Appian, in speaking of the expiatory chapel which was dedicated to Pompeius at the foot of Mount Casius, remarks incidentally, *This little shrine was destroyed in our own time by the Jews, in the internecine war which Trajan waged against them.*[1] Such was the fury on the one side, such the vengeance on the other.

and in Egypt.

The report of these internal troubles cast a deep gloom over Trajan's spirit. He was conscious that he had no longer the strength to contend in person against them, and it was no doubt

Trajan returns to Antioch.

[1] Salvador refers to this passage (*Bell. Civ.* ii. 90.) with the object of signalizing the mercilessness of the Romans; but this is the device of an advocate, and does not befit the impartiality of history.

with bitter sorrow that he took leave of his armies at Antioch, and handed over to his lieutenants the comrades of so many well-fought fields. As the summer advanced, he turned his face again westward; but his robust constitution had been shattered by fatigue; possibly the chagrin of his last repulse had aggravated the pestilential vapours of Atra. According to some accounts, he fancied himself suffering from poison; but the virus, if such there were, was infused into his system by the air and the climate, not by the hand of man. His disorder appears to have assumed the form of dropsy. He became rapidly worse, and could proceed no further than Selinus in Cilicia, where he expired on one of the first days of August. His reign, extended beyond the term of any of his predecessors since Tiberius, numbered nineteen years and a half, and he had reached the age of sixty-five years, spent in almost uninterrupted activity. Trajan was the first of the Cæsars who had met his death at a distance from Rome and Italy, the first whose life had been cut short in the actual service of his country. Such a fate deserved to be signalized by an extraordinary distinction. The charred remains of the greatest of the emperors were conveyed to Rome, and suffered to repose in a golden urn, at the foot of his own column, within the precincts of the city.[1]

His sickness on his return to Rome,

and death at Selinus.

But the thread of imperial life could hardly snap without a jar which would be felt throughout the whole extent of the empire. Trajan, like Alexander, had been cut off suddenly in the far East, and, like Alexander, he had

Perils of the empire, and question of the succession.

[1] Eutropius, viii. 5.: "Solus omnium intra urbem sepultus est." The same distinction had been accorded to Julius Cæsar: "Ossa ejus collocata in urna aurea in foro quod ædificavit sub columna sita sunt." Dion, lxix. 2.: τὰ δὲ τοῦ Τραϊανοῦ ὀστᾶ ἐν τῷ κίονι αὐτοῦ κατετέθη. The column seems indeed to stand precisely on the line of the Servian wall.

left no avowed successor. Several of his generals abroad might advance nearly equal claims to the sword of Trajan ; some of the senators at home might deem themselves not unworthy of the purple of Nerva. On every side there was an army or a faction ready to devote itself to the service of its favourite or its champion. The provinces lately annexed were at the same time in a state of ominous agitation; along one-half of the frontiers, Britons, Germans, and Sarmatians were mustering their forces for invasion; a virulent insurrection was still glowing throughout a large portion of the empire. Nevertheless the compact body of the Roman commonwealth was still held firmly together by its inherent self-attraction. There was no tendency to split in pieces, as in the ill-cemented masses of the Macedonian conquest; and the presence of mind of a clever woman was well employed in effecting the peaceful transfer of power, and relieving the state from the stress of disruption.

Trajan fortunate in the moment of his death.

Of the accession of Publius Ælius Hadrianus to the empire; of the means by which it was effected; of the character and reputation he brought with him to the throne; of the first measures of his reign, by which he renounced the latest conquests of his predecessor, while he put forth all his power to retain the realms bequeathed him from an earlier period, I shall speak at large hereafter. It will be well to return, in concluding our present review of Eastern affairs, to the great Jewish insurrection, and the important consequences which followed from it. Trajan was surely fortunate in the moment of his death. Vexed as he doubtless was, by the frustration of his grand designs for incorporating the Parthian monarchy with the Roman, and fulfilling the idea of universal empire which had flitted through the mind of Pompeius or Julius, but had been deliberately rejected by Augustus and Vespasian, his proud spirit would have been broken

indeed, had he lived to witness the difficulties in which Rome was plunged at his death, the spread of the Jewish revolt in Asia and Palestine, the aggressions of the Moors, the Scythians, and the Britons at the most distant points of his dominions.[1] The momentary success of the insurgents of Cyprus and Cyrene had prompted a general assurance that the conquering race was no longer invincible, and the last great triumphs of its legions were followed by a rebound of fortune still more momentous. The first act of the new reign was the formal relinquishment of the new provinces beyond the Euphrates.[2] The Parthian tottered back with feeble step to his accustomed frontiers. Arabia was left unmolested; India was no longer menaced. Armenia found herself once more suspended between two rival empires, of which the one was too weak to seize, the other too weak to retain her. All the forces of Rome in the East were now set free to complete the suppression of the Jewish disturbances. The flames of insurrection which had broken out in so many remote quarters were concentrated, and burnt more fiercely than ever, in the ancient centre of the Jewish nationality. Martius Turbo, appointed to command in Palestine, was equally amazed at the fanaticism and the numbers of people whose faith had been mocked, whose hopes frustrated, whose

Hadrian relinquishes the new provinces beyond Euphrates.

Insurrection of the Jews in Palestine.

[1] Spartian, *Hadrian.* 5.: "Deficientibus his nationibus quas Trajanus subegerat, Mauri lacessebant, Sarmatæ bellum inferebant, Britanni teneri sub Romana ditione non poterant, Ægyptus seditionibus urgebatur, Lycia denique ac Palæstina rebelles animos efferebant."

[2] Spartian, *l. c.*: "Quare omnia trans Euphratem ac Tigrim reliquit, exemplo ut dicebat Catonis, qui Macedonas liberos pronuntiavit quia teneri non poterant." See Livy, xlv. 18., who however gives a different account of the matter. Of Hadrian's relinquishment of Dacia I shall speak later. There seems no reason whatever for attributing to jealousy of Trajan measures which were imperatively demanded by the circumstances of the times. Comp. Eutrop. viii. 3.; Fronto, *Princip. Hist.* p. 244.

young men had been decimated, whose old men, women and children, had been enslaved and exiled. Under the teaching of the doctors of Tiberias faith had been cherished, and hope had revived. Despised and unmolested for fifty years, a new generation had risen from the soil of their ancestors, recruited by the multitudes who flocked homewards year by year, with an unextinguishable love of country, and reinforced by the fugitives from many scenes of persecution, all animated with a growing conviction that the last struggle of their race was at hand, to be contested on the site of their old historic triumphs.

The Jewish nationality preserved by the teaching of the Jewish doctors at Tiberias.

It is not perhaps wholly fanciful to imagine that the Jewish leaders, after the fall of their city and temple and the great dispersion of their people, deliberately invented new means for maintaining their cherished nationality. Their conquerors, as they might observe, were scattered, like themselves, over the face of the globe, and abode wherever they conquered; but the laws, the manners, and the traditions of Rome were preserved almost intact amidst alien races by the consciousness that there existed a visible centre of their nation, the source, as it were, to which they might repair to draw the waters of political life. But the dispersion of the Jews seemed the more irremediable, as the destruction of their central home was complete. To preserve the existence of their nation one other way presented itself. In their sacred books they retained a common bond of law and doctrine, such as no other people could boast. In those venerated records they possessed, whether on the Tiber or the Euphrates, an elixir of unrivalled virtue. With a sudden revulsion of feeling, the popular orators and captains betook themselves to the study of the law, its history and antiquities, its actual text and its inner meaning. The schools of Tiberias resounded with debate on the rival principles of interpretation,

the ancient and the modern, the stricter and the laxer, known respectively by the names of their teachers, Schammai and Hillel. The doctors decided in favour of the more accommodating system, by which the stern exclusiveness of the original letter was extenuated, and the law of the rude tribes of Palestine moulded to the varied taste and temper of a cosmopolitan society, while the text itself was embalmed in the Masora, an elaborate system of punctuation and notation, to every particle of which, to ensure its uncorrupted preservation, a mystical significance was attached. By this curious contrivance the letter of the Law, the charter of Judaism, was sanctified for ever, while its spirit was remodelled to the exigencies of the present or the future, till it would have been no longer recognised by its authors, or even by very recent disciples. To this new learning of traditions and glosses the ardent youth of the nation devoted itself with a fanaticism not less vehement than that which had fought and bled half a century before.

Typical character of the Rabbi Akiba.

The name of the Rabbi Akiba is preserved as a type of the hierophant of restored Judaism. The stories respecting him are best expounded as myths and figures. He reached, it was said, the age of a hundred and twenty years, the period assigned in the sacred records to his prototype the lawgiver Moses. Like David, in his youth he kept sheep on the mountains; like Jacob, he served a master, a rich citizen of Jerusalem; for Jerusalem in his youth was still standing. His master's daughter cast eyes of affection upon him, and offered him a secret marriage; but this damsel was no other than Jerusalem itself, so often imaged to the mind of the Jewish people by the figure of a maiden, a wife, or a widow. This mystic bride required him to repair to the schools, acquire knowledge and wisdom, surround himself with disciples; and such, as we have seen, was the actual policy of the new defenders

of Judaism. The damsel was rebuked by her indignant father; but when after the lapse of twelve years Akiba returned to claim his bride with twelve thousand scholars at his heels, he overheard her replying, that long as he had been absent she only wished him to prolong his stay twice over, so as to double his knowledge; whereupon he returned patiently to his studies, and frequented the schools twelve years longer. Twice twelve years thus past, he returned once more with twice twelve thousand disciples, and then his wife received him joyfully, and covered as she was with rags, an outcast and a beggar, he presented her to his astonished followers as the being to whom he owed his wisdom, his fame, and his fortune. Such were the legends with which the new learning was consecrated to the defence of Jewish nationality.[1]

Barcochebas, the Son of a Star, appointed leader of the Jews.
A.D. 131.
. 884.

The concentration of the Roman forces on the soil of Palestine seems to have repressed for a season all overt attempts at insurrection. The Jewish leaders restrained their followers from action, as long as it was possible to feed their spirit with hopes only. It was not till about the fourteenth year of Hadrian's reign that the final revolt broke out, but it will be convenient to embrace it in our present review of the long struggle of the nation throughout the regions in which it was dispersed. When the Jews of Palestine launched forth upon the war, the doctor Akiba gave place to the warrior Barcochebas. This gallant warrior, the last of the national heroes, received or assumed his title, *the Son of the Star*, given successively to several leaders of the Jewish people, in token of the fanatic expectations of divine deliverance by which his countrymen did not yet cease to be animated.[2] Many were the legends

[1] Salvador, *Domination Romaine en Judée*, ii. 547. foll.
[2] The allusion was to the prophecy of Balaam, *Numbers* xxiv. 17. Comp. Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 6.

which declared this champion's claims to the leadership of the national cause. His size and strength were vaunted as more than human; *it was the arm of God, not of man,* said Hadrian, when he saw at last the corpse encircled by a serpent, *that could alone strike down the giant.* Flame and smoke were seen to issue from his lips in speaking, a portent which was rationalized centuries later into a mere conjuror's artifice.[1] The concourse of the Jewish nation at his summons was symbolized, with a curious reference to the prevalent idea of Israel as a school and the Law as a master, by the story that at Bethar, the appointed rendezvous and last stronghold of the national defence, were four hundred academies, each ruled by four hundred teachers, each teacher boasting a class of four hundred pupils. Akiba, now at the extreme point of his protracted existence, like Samuel of old, nominated the new David to the chiefship of the people. He girded Barcochebas with the sword of Jehovah, placed the staff of command in his hand, and held himself the stirrup by which he vaulted into the saddle.[2]

Defeat of the Jews, and death of Barcochebas. A. D. 132. A. U. 885.

The last revolt of the Jewish people was precipitated apparently by the increased severity of the measures which the rebellion under Trajan had drawn down. They complained that Hadrian had enrolled himself as a proselyte of the Law, and were doubly incensed against him as a persecutor and a renegade. This assertion indeed may have no foundation; on the other hand, it is not unlikely that this prince, a curious explorer of religious opinions, had sought initiation into some of the mysteries of the Jewish faith and ritual. But

[1] The statement rests on the authority of St. Jerome, who derides the imposture with fanatical bitterness. *In Ruf.* iii. (tom. iv. par. 2. p. 466. ed. 1706): "Ut ille Barcochebas auctor seditionis Judaicæ stipulam in ore succensam anhelitu ventilabat, ut flammas evomere putaretur."

[2] Salvador, ii. 569.; with citations from the Talmud.

however this may be, he gave them mortal offence by perceiving the clear distinction between Judaism and Christianity, and by forbidding the Jews to sojourn in the town which he was again raising on the ruins of Jerusalem, while he allowed free access to their rivals. He is said to have even prohibited the rite of circumcision, by which they jealously maintained their separation from the nations of the West. At last, when they rose in arms, he sent his best generals against them. Tinnius Rufus was long baffled, and often defeated; but Julius Severus, following the tactics of Vespasian, constantly refused the battle they offered him, and reduced their strongholds in succession by superior discipline and resources.[1] Barcochebas struggled with the obstinacy of despair. Every excess of cruelty was committed on both sides, and it is well perhaps that the details of this mortal spasm are almost wholly lost to us. The later Christian writers, while they allude with unseemly exultation to the overthrow of one inveterate enemy by another, who proved himself in the end not less inveterate, affirmed that the barbarities of the Jewish leader were mainly directed against themselves. On such interested assertions we shall place little reliance. In the counter-narrative of the Jews even the name of Christian is contemptuously disregarded. It relates, however, how at the storming of Bethar, when Barcochebas perished in the field, ten of the most learned of the Rabbis were taken and put cruelly to death, while Akiba, reserved to expire last, and torn in pieces with hot pincers, continued to attest the great principle of the Jewish doctrine, still exclaiming in his death-throes, *Jehovah erhad; God is one.*[2]

The Jews who fell in these their latest combats are counted by hundreds of thousands, and we may

[1] Dion, lxix. 13. A.D. 132–135, A.U. 885–888; *Hadrian.* 6–19.
[2] Salvador, ii. 577.

conclude that the suppression of the revolt was followed by sanguinary proscriptions, by wholesale captivity, and general banishment.[1] The dispersion of the unhappy race, particularly in the West, was now complete and final. The sacred soil of Jerusalem was occupied by a Roman colony, which received the name of Ælia Capitolina, with reference to the emperor who founded it, and to the supreme God of the Pagan mythology, installed on the desecrated summits of Zion and Moriah. The fane of Jupiter was erected on the site of the holy Temple, and a shrine of Venus flaunted, we are assured, on the very spot hallowed to Christians by our Lord's crucifixion.[2] But Hadrian had no purpose of insulting the disciples of Jesus, and this desecration, if the tradition be true, was probably accidental. A Jewish legend affirms that the figure of a swine was sculptured, in bitter mockery, over a gate of the new city. The Jews have retorted with equal scorn that the effigy of the unclean animal, which represented to their minds every low and bestial appetite, was a fitting emblem of the colony and its founder, of the lewd worship of its gods, and the vile propensities of its emperor.[3]

Foundation of the colony of Ælia Capitolina, and desecration of the holy places of Jerusalem. A. D. 133. A. U. 886.

The fancy of later Christian writers, that Hadrian regarded their co-religionists with special consideration, seems founded on a misconception. We hear, indeed, of the graciousness with which he allowed them, among other sec-

Final separation of the Christians from the Jews.

[1] Dion specifies the exact number of the Jewish people slain in battle at 580,000; while, as he says, the multitudes that perished by famine and pestilence exceeded all calculation. These statements are probably as extravagant as those of Josephus. Dion adds, however, a singular circumstance, if true, with reference to the losses of the Romans, namely, that in his despatches to the senate, the emperor was constrained to omit the usual formula: "If you and yours are well, it is well; I and my army are well." Dion, lxix. 14.

[2] This last fact, for which we are referred to Epiphan., *de Mens.* 14., is allowed to be doubtful by Gregorovius, *Hadr.* p. 56.

[3] Salvador, ii. 583.

tarians, to defend their usages and expound their doctrines in his presence; and doubtless his curiosity, if no worthier feeling, was moved by the fact, which he fully appreciated, of the interest they excited in certain quarters of the empire. But there is no evidence that his favour extended further than to the recognition of their independence of the Jews, from whom they now formally separated themselves, and the discouragement of the local persecutions to which they were occasionally subjected.[1] So far the bigoted hostility of their enemies was overruled at last in their favour. In another way they learnt to profit by the example of their rivals. From the recent policy of the Jews they might understand the advantage to a scattered community, without a local centre or a political status, of erecting in a volume of sacred records their acknowledged standard of faith and practice. The Scriptures of the New Testament, like the Mischna of the Jewish Rabbis, took the place of the Holy of Holies as the tabernacle of their God, and the pledge of their union with Him. The canon of their sacred books, however casual its apparent formation, was indeed a providential development. The habitual references of bishops and doctors to the

[1] Orosius, vii. 13., expresses the favourable opinion commonly entertained of this emperor by the Christians, on the ground that he relieved them from persecution, and avenged them on the cruel Barcochebas: "Præcepitque ne cui Judæo introeundi Hierosolymam esset licentia, Christianis tantum civitate permissa." On the other hand Sulp. Severus speaks very bitterly of Hadrian: "Qua tempestate Hadrianus, existimans se Christianam fidem *loci injuria* perempturum, et in templo ac loco Dominicæ passionis dæmonum simulacra constituit. Et quia Christiani ex Judæis potissimum putabantur (namque tum Hierosolymæ non nisi ex circumcisione habebat ecclesia sacerdotem), militum cohortem custodias in perpetuum agitare jussit, quæ *Judæos omnes* Hierosolymæ aditu arceret. Quod quidem Christianæ fidei proficiebat, quia tum pene omnes Christum Deum *sub observatione legis* credebant . . . . . . Ita tum primum Marcus ex gentibus apud Hierosolymam episcopus fuit." *Hist. Sacr.* ii. 45. This last fact is taken from Eusebius, who gives a catalogue of the twelve bishops, all of the circumcision, who had previously presided over the church at Jerusalem. *Hist. Eccl. l. c.*

words of their Founder, and the writings of his first disciples, guided them to the proper sources of their faith, and taught them justly to discriminate the genuine from the spurious. Meagre as are the remains of Christian literature of the second century, they tend to confirm our assurance that the Scriptures of the New Dispensation were known and recognised as divine at that early period, and that the Church of Christ, the future mistress of the world, was already become a great social fact, an empire within the empire.

CHAPTER LXVI.

Birth and parentage of Hadrian.—His education and accomplishments. — His rise under Trajan's guardianship. — His alleged adoption and succession.—He abandons Trajan's conquests in the East.—His campaign in Mœsia, A. D. 118.—Suppression of a conspiracy against him.—He courts the senate and the people.—Hadrian's first progress.—He visits Gaul, Germany, Spain, Mauretania, confers with the king of Parthia, visits Athens, Sicily and Carthage, A. D. 119–123. — His second progress: he resides at Athens, Alexandria, and Antioch; character of learning and society at these cities respectively; he revisits Athens, and returns finally to Rome, A. D. 125–134.—His buildings at Rome.—Adoption of Ceionius Verus, A. D. 135, who dies prematurely.—Adoption of Aurelius Antoninus, A. D. 138, who adopts Annius Verus and L. Verus. — Infirmities and death of Hadrian, A. D. 138.—His character and personal appearance. (A. D. 117–138, A. U. 870–891.)

Birth and parentage of the emperor Hadrian.

THE family of the man who had now attained the sovereignty of the Roman people, was derived from the obscure municipality of Hadria in Picenum, an offshoot from the Etruscan city of Cisalpine Gaul which gave its name to the Adriatic sea.[1] Three centuries earlier, a direct

[1] We arrive, with the reign of Hadrian, at the series of imperial biographies which goes under the name of the *Historia Augusta.* The writers, six in number, are known as Spartianus, Capitolinus, Gallicanus, Lampridius, Trebellius and Vopiscus. It comprises, with one short interval, an account of the emperors from the death of Trajan to the accession of Diocletian, under whom, or not long after, the several pieces seem to have been written. Of the writers themselves little or nothing is known, nor are the limits of their respective authorship in all cases satisfactorily determined. Hence Gibbon preferred to cite them indiscriminately under the common title of the *Augustan History.* Of their value a good estimate is given by Professor Ramsay in Smith's *Dictionary Class. Biograph.* They follow the type of the biographies of Suetonius, and we may perhaps rely upon them generally for their account of the salient events of history, and their views of character; but we must guard against the trifling and incredible anecdotes with which they abound, and acknowledge their inferiority in credit even to the biographies of the Cæsars.

ancestor had visited Spain in the armies of the Scipios, and had settled in the Roman colony of Italica, where his descendants continued to retain, in the surname of Hadrianus, a memorial of the place whence they originally sprang. The Ælian Gens, with which the emperor claimed connexion, was an ancient stem, which had thrown off many illustrious branches, distinguished in the records of the plebeian nobility of Rome. But the pride of historic descent was already becoming faint among the Romans. The new men, raised by imperial favour from the lowest class of citizens, and even from the ranks of foreign freedmen, or thrown up by the mutations of fortune from their decent obscurity in the provinces, had so far outnumbered the remnant of really ancient families, as even to cast a slur on the genuine claims of birth and ancestral dignity. The complacent feelings with which a few scions of the old aristocracy might still regard their historic origin, must have been sorely lacerated by the scorn with which they were chastised by Juvenal. In branding their pretensions as weak and even criminal, he spoke, as they well knew, the real sentiments of the day.[1] Accordingly Hadrian's flatterers made

[1] Juvenal, *Sat.* viii.:

"Rarus enim ferme sensus communis in illa Fortuna . . . . miserum est aliorum incumbere famæ . . . ergo cavebis, Et metues, ne tu sis Creticus aut Camerinus."

The satirist expresses the common sense and utilitarian logic of his day, when the people were awakening from many ancient illusions, the belief in which, nevertheless, had constituted the strength of the nation. Such a diatribe as his eighth satire is a startling sign of the age of transition to which it belonged. We cannot imagine its being written even a century earlier. Tiberius, and possibly Augustus, would have rejoiced at such a blow administered to the haughty aristocracy, which they flattered and cajoled; but the times were not then ripe for it. It would have been equally out of date a century later. An appeal to the "sensus communis," or common feelings of mankind, marks the decline of the "animus civilis," or "sensus vere Romanus," as we might call it. The whole satire indicates contempt for privileges of birth, and even of race. The Arpinate is as good as the Roman, the plebeian as the patrician, the

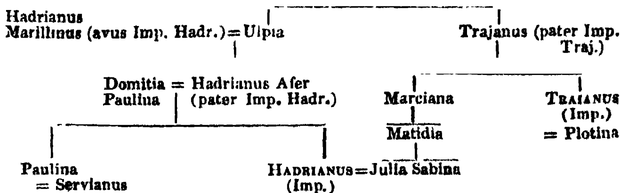
apparently no effort to prove, by forced or fancied genealogies, that their patron deserved by his birth a primacy of honour among his countrymen. They were content that he should be judged by his personal merits, and these, as it proved, were unquestionably such as could be little enhanced by the fairest gifts of fortune. It is enough, then, to say that P. Ælius Hadrianus was the son of Hadrianus Afer, a first cousin of Trajan. His mother was a Domitia Paulina of Gades. His grandfather Marillinus was the first of the family who attained the dignity of a senator, and his sister Paulina was united to a man of great distinction at Rome, many years older than herself, named Servianus. Hadrian was born at Rome, Jan. 24, A.D. 76 (A.U. 829), in the seventh consulship of Vespasian.[1]

His education and accomplishments.

Hadrian's childhood was spent probably at Rome, amidst the high society of the capital, and when he was left an orphan at the age of ten years, he was taken under the guardianship of Trajan, then occupying the post of prætorian prefect, and of a knight of good family, named Attianus.[2] For five years he was placed under the fashionable teachers of letters and philosophy in Greece, and the

slave as the freeman. Comp. Juven. viii. 56., with the argument at the conclusion of Dion Chrys. *Orat.* xv.

[1] Spartian, *Hadrian.* i. It will be convenient to the reader to have a synoptical view of the connexion of the two emperors.



[2] Spartian, *Hadr. l. c.*; Dion, lxix. 1. The MSS. fluctuate between the names Attianus and Tatianus.

success which attended him in these and other kindred studies, the boast of the city of Minerva, gained him the familiar nickname of Græculus.[1] *He became imbued*, we are assured, *with the true spirit of the Athenians, and not only acquired their language, but rivalled them in all their special accomplishments, in singing, in playing, in medicine, in mathematics, in painting and in sculpture, in which he nearly equalled a Polycletus and a Euphranor.*[2] *His memory*, it is added, *was prodigious, his application incredible. He was various and versatile in his tastes; his interests were manifold and many-sided. He was smart in attack, and ready in reply with argument, abuse, or banter.* But the activity of his body equalled that of his mind, and besides the ordinary training in arms and feats of agility which was proper to his age and position, he devoted himself with ardour to the toils and excitement of the chase. The high places of Roman society had seen no such universal talents since those of the incomparable Julius, and Hadrian might rival, moreover, the son of Venus himself in the majestic beauty of his person, and the gracefulness of his manners. We know, unfortunately, too little of his real character to judge of the points in which his inferiority actually consisted, and why it is that the first of the Cæsars so naturally takes his place in the highest rank of

[1] Spartian, *l. c.* This writer, from whose confused statements we gather our information about Hadrian's early career, does not expressly say that he was educated at Athens: "Quintodecimo anno ad patriam rediit;" by which I understand "Rome," where he was born, where he soon after this period filled the office of "decemvir litibus dijudicandis." Casaubon thinks it refers to Italica, the home of his family, and gravely asks, "An quia Romæ natus quidem Hadrianus sed Italicæ conceptus?" If Hadrian so returned to Rome in his fifteenth year, he must have been educated elsewhere, and therefore, as we may conclude, in Greece.

[2] Victor, *Epit.* 28.: "Proxime Polycletos et Euphranoras." In the text I have extracted only a specimen of the long list of excellences enumerated by the writer.

genius, while the cleverest of his successors is hardly set above the second; but this, at least, we may observe, that the mere acquisition of manifold knowledge was far easier in the time of Hadrian than at the earlier epoch, and that in a generation of intellectual dwarfs, a moderate stature might command extravagant admiration. Yet it may fairly be concluded that the first man of one age would probably have made himself first in any other, and the rivalry of a Cicero, a Varro, and a Sulpicius might have elevated Hadrian to the acknowledged pre-eminence of Julius himself.

He rises, under Trajan's patronage, to the consulship.

But scholastic training and academic acquirements, unaccompanied by active life, might have placed a pedant, a second Claudius, on the throne. For such a completion of the imperial character the times afforded Hadrian the widest scope. From his early studies he was summoned to a civil office in Rome, under the eye of influential patrons, and with the fairest prospect of advancement. His industry did justice to his abilities, and both to his opportunities. Meanwhile his guardian Trajan was placed in high command on the frontiers, and Hadrian, attached perhaps to his staff or cohort, served in Upper Germany, and attained the rank of tribune in the army of Pannonia.[1] At this period, that is, towards the end of Domitian's reign, while the rise even of his patron was beyond the reach of conjecture, he was confirmed by a soothsayer in the presage of a lofty destiny, which had been already discovered for him at his birth.[2] The path of fortune

[1] Hadrian was a tribune of the Second Legio Adjutrix, which, as Dion informs us, was stationed in Lower Pannonia, and transferred in the latter years of Domitian to Lower Mœsia. Dion, lxv. 24.; Spartian, *Hadr.* 2. This legion had been levied by Vespasian, together with the Fourth Flavia and the Sixteenth Flavia Firma. Dion, *l. c.*; Tac. *Hist.* iv. 68. See Marquardt (Becker's *Alterthümer*, iii. 2. p. 355.). These levies were employed to repress the inroads of the Sarmatians and the menaces of the Parthians.

[2] According to the story repeated by Spartianus, he consulted the "Sortes Virgilianæ," and opened the mystic volume on the lines—

speedily opened to him. When Trajan was adopted by Nerva at Rome, the army on the Danube deputed Hadrian to convey their congratulations to the new Imperator at his quarters on the Rhine. The young man was eager to execute so agreeable a mission; but his brother-in-law Servianus, who, it seems, had already spitefully divulged his excesses and debts to his guardian, tried hard to detain him, and would have frustrated it by getting his chariot to be broken on the way. But Hadrian was not to be thus baffled. Leaving his disabled vehicle on the road, and continuing his journey on foot without a moment's delay, till he could obtain the means of more expeditious travelling, he succeeded in outstripping the courier sent by Servianus to anticipate him.[1] Trajan received him cordially, employed and trusted him. But he was still more distinguished by the favour of Plotina, which secured him Sabina, the daughter of Matidia, in marriage; though Trajan himself, it was said, was indisposed to the match, which might seem to savour too much of a political adoption. From this time, however, Hadrian's advancement became, as might be expected, more rapid. Trajan, now sole emperor, and in his fourth consulship, appointed him quæstor, in which capacity he recited the prince's messages to the senate, and is said to have betrayed but an imperfect command of the Roman accent, which he had lost by almost constant absence from the city since his childhood. In the same year he attended the emperor in the first Dacian

A. D. 101.
A. U. 854.

"Quis procul ille autem ramis insignis olivæ
Sacra ferens? nosco crines incanaque menta
Regis Romani."

The olive typified the Athenian accomplishments of Hadrian; the beard, not usually worn at this time by the Romans, was an appendage brought also from Greece. Ammianus Marcellinus (xxii. 12.) repeats a strange legend that Hadrian caused the mouth of the Delphic cavern to be closed with large stones, that none after him might derive from the oracle the expectation of empire.

[1] Spartian, *Hadr. l. c.*

expedition, and he was wont to excuse his indulgence in wine during his sojourn in the camp by pretending that he was required to follow his general's example. After attaining the dignity, now merely nominal, of Tribune of the Plebs, he was entrusted in the second Dacian war with the command of the First Minervian legion, and his services were acknowledged by the present of a diamond ring, which Trajan had himself received from Nerva. This he complacently regarded as a pledge, or at least an augury, of the imperial succession. The ædileship he was allowed to waive on account of his military employments; but he succeeded in due course to the prætorship, again repaired to the provinces, and as governor of Lower Pannonia checked an inroad of the Sarmatians. The strictness of his discipline, and the firmness of his civil administration here, recommended him for the last and highest dignity a subject could attain, and during Trajan's residence in Rome he was appointed consul-suffect. To the emperor and his consort he continued constantly to attach himself; he took part in Trajan's expedition into the East, and through the interest of Plotina received the prefecture of Syria.

A. D. 117.
A. U. 870.

He was finally appointed consul a second time, but again suffect, in the year 117. This appointment did not require his presence in Rome, and he was resident at Antioch as the seat of his government at the moment of his patron's decease.[1]

Hadrian popularly designated heir to the empire.

Such were the steps in the career of honours accomplished by this fortunate aspirant; and it is interesting to remark how nearly they correspond with the march of a Lucullus or a Cicero in the free state. So faithfully did the outward form of the Roman government in the ninth century, after a hundred and sixty years of monarchy, retain the impress of

[1] Spartian, *Hadr. l. c.*

the days of the republic.[1] In one, however, who occupied the place of Hadrian about the emperor, this succession of honours was peculiarly significant. Sura, Trajan's chief adviser, could distinctly assure him that he was destined for adoption, and all Rome began to designate him as heir to the empire, the nobles vying with one another in paying court to him. On Sura's death he found himself possessed of a still larger share of his prince's confidence, which was frivolously ascribed by some observers who chose to overlook the natural reasons for it, to the good service he rendered him in composing his speeches. Still more maliciously did they insinuate that he stood too high in the favour of Plotina; and finally, as if still unsatisfied, they did not scruple to pretend that he won the freedmen of the palace to his interests by the basest compliances.[2] So feeble was the character of the Romans at this period; such the petty conceptions they now commonly entertained of the springs of human conduct.

Rumours about the succession.

Trajan had died childless, and whatever hopes or expectations might have been formed in any quarter, he had adopted no heir, nor indicated by any overt act a successor to the purple. Sufficient as he had felt himself, even in his declining years, for the whole weight of the empire, he had placed no colleague at his side to train him for independent sovereignty. About the future succession there were as many rumours as there were interests. The senate and the civilians of the capital leant to the expectation that their prince intended to nominate Neratius Priscus, a learned jurist and an experienced administrator. The

[1] The only discrepancy lay in the innovation of the suffect consulship, but outwardly there was little difference in Roman eyes between the honorary office of one or two months and the annual magistracy. The spirit of the two institutions was indeed widely at variance.

[2] Spartian, *Hadr.* 3, 4.; Dion, lxix. 1.

soldiers whispered the name of Lusius Quietus, the most distinguished of their captains, who would have been as acceptable to the camps as Priscus to the city. But Lusius, though he had commanded Roman armies, though he had been raised for a month to the consulship, and now governed a province, was neither a citizen nor even a provincial by origin, but only a Moorish chieftian, who had volunteered into the Roman service at the head of a band of mercenaries.[1] Such an adoption would have been an outrage on the senate, with which Trajan had acted in harmony throughout his reign, and to which, according to another report, he proposed to leave the free choice of its future ruler. Some, indeed, surmised that as he sought to follow the great Alexander in his military career, so he might designedly leave the empire as the prize of *the worthiest*: but such speculators forgot that while the senate alone claimed the legal right of appointment, the army exercised actual power, and that it was perilous to leave such a prize to be contended for by such antagonists. It seems more likely that Trajan's genuine respect for his council made him hesitate; and his anxiety, when sensible of the inroads of disease, to return to Rome, may indicate a wish to make his final arrangements in concert with it. But the moment of nomination had been too long delayed. In the last hours of mortal infirmity the master of the Roman world might be no longer master of himself. He might become the sport of a favourite or a woman, of his kinsman or his consort. It is true that in the person of Hadrian almost every claim was united. He was in the vigour of his age, of fine personal appearance, admirably accomplished, nor untried as an officer; he had filled the highest civil posts, and occupied at the moment the most important of all charges, the pre-

[1] Little weight can be attached to the intimation of Themistius (*Orat.* xvi.) that Trajan designed this man for his successor.

fecture of Syria. He was doubly connected with Trajan, as his cousin in blood, and his niece's husband. Yet all these claims might have pleaded in vain for him now, as hitherto, but for the favour of the empress, who felt the liveliest concern in a question which so nearly touched her own position and interests. From the moment that Trajan quitted Antioch, through the mournful stages of the journey to Selinus, she had not ceased to intercede for Hadrian's adoption. Such influence, thus exerted under whatever motive, might easily prevail. There seems no reason to question the assertion that at Plotina's instigation Trajan, almost in his last moments, and when he could no longer hold a pen (if it be true that his name was actually subscribed by her hand to the instrument), addressed to the senate a declaration that he had adopted Hadrian, subject only to its gracious confirmation. The day of the emperor's decease is not accurately known; it was imagined that the event was concealed for a brief interval to favour Plotina's contrivance. On the 9th of August, we are told, Hadrian received at Antioch the intelligence of his adoption. Two days later his parent's death was notified to him, and the legions, to which he immediately addressed himself, accepted him without hesitation. But it was impossible to establish beyond cavil the genuineness of this sudden adoption, and Dion could cite the authority of his own father, who was at a later period governor of Cilicia, for his assertion that it was wholly fictitious. According to a rumour recorded in the fourth century, Trajan had already ceased to breathe, when Plotina removed the body, placed a confidential servant on the couch, drew the curtains close, and summoned witnesses into the chamber, who heard a feeble moan, as of their dying master, declaring that he adopted as his son, and nominated as his suc-

Alleged adoption of Hadrian by Trajan on his deathbed.

cessor, his trusty and well-beloved kinsman, Publius Ælius Hadrianus.[1]

Hadrian's succession confirmed by the senate and the army.

The troops at Antioch received their hero's last commands with respectful acquiescence; but the insecurity which Hadrian himself felt seems to be marked by the donative, of twice the usual amount, with which he hastened to gratify them.[2] But if Lusius Quietus and Martius Turbo had higher claims on their regard, as military leaders, these men were absent at the moment from head-quarters, and the timely liberality of Plotina's favourite carried the day against them. Hadrian was equally politic, and not less successful in his overtures to the senate. To that body he professed the most entire deference, excusing himself for having yielded to the precipitate greetings of the soldiers, whom it was impossible, he said, to leave for one day without a legitimate imperator. In suing for a confirmation of the late prince's will, and of the wishes of the legions, he vowed that he would assume no honours, nor suffer them to be decreed him, till he had applied for them in person in acknowledgment of actual services. Hitherto it had been customary for the senate to confer immediately on the new emperor all the functions and titles of supreme power. But at intervals only, and one by one, would Hadrian consent to accept them, and the title of *Pater Patriæ*,

1 Dion, lxix. 1.; Spartian, *Hadr.* 4.; Victor, *Cæs.* 13.

2 Spartian, *Hadr.* 5.: "Ob auspicia imperii." The donative to the soldiers was originally a gift from the captured booty on the occasion of a triumph. Octavius, after the battle of Mutina, presented each of his soldiers with 10,000 H.S. or about 80*l.* He gave other sums, sometimes larger, sometimes smaller, on different occasions. Caius was the first who gave a donative on his accession; this was only 1,000 H.S. or 8*l.* per man. Claudius and Nero followed this example, increasing the sum to 15,000 H.S.; but this seems to have been confined to the prætorians. From this time the custom was regularly adopted, but the sum given is not generally specified. At a later period Pertinax gave 12,000 H.S. and Julianus 20,000. Marquardt (Becker's *Alterthümer*), iii. 2. p. 439, note.

the highest distinction of all, he refrained from adopting till a much later period. The chiefs of the civil administration were won over by this show of deference, and became ardent supporters of a throne which was at first manifestly unstable. The zeal of the prætorian prefects whom Hadrian appointed, his former guardian Attianus, and a man of tried and noble character named Similis, sufficed to protect his interests during his absence from the city, and he was enabled to give proof of his clemency at the commencement of his career by remitting the punishment of some pretenders to the empire.[1] Meanwhile Matidia bore the remains of Trajan in a golden urn to Rome, where they were received with peculiar distinction. The senate admitted their friend and patron to the honours of apotheosis without hesitation, and his successor erected a temple to his divinity in the Ulpian forum, and instituted *the Parthian games* in his honour.[2]

Apotheosis of Trajan.

Hadrian, however, had no intention of retaining his place permanently at the head of his armies. His most anxious care at the outset of his reign was to dispose his officers and legions in the manner most conducive to his own security. He placed Catilius Severus, a man of no conspicuous eminence, in the prefecture of Syria; but at the same time he removed Lusius Quietus from his important command in the East, and sent him to the obscure and distant government of Mauretania. The control of Palestine was entrusted to Martius Turbo. The withdrawal of the Roman forces from the regions occupied by Trajan beyond the ancient frontiers was a measure of actual necessity; and the notion that the abandonment of these recent

Hadrian abandons Trajan's conquests in the East.

[1] Spartian, *Hadr.* 5.: "Tantum clementiæ habuit, ut cum sub primis imperii diebus ab Attiano per epistolas esset admonitus . . . neminem læderet."

[2] Spartian, *Hadr.* 6.; Euseb. *Chron.*

acquisitions was prompted by a mean jealousy of the conqueror may be discarded as wholly groundless. The conquests of Trajan in the East were plainly unsubstantial. There was no soil beyond the Euphrates in which Roman institutions could take root, while the expense of maintaining them would have been utterly exhausting. But Hadrian was also sensible of the danger to his authority from the ambition of military chiefs placed there in unlimited command of men and money, and removed by the enormous distance from effectual supervision and control. On all these grounds there can be no doubt of his discretion in recurring, at least in this quarter, to the deliberate policy of Augustus, and confining the possessions of the empire within their natural or traditional limits.[1] The execution of these arrangements may have occupied the remainder of the year 117. On their completion Hadrian removed from Antioch, and repaired to Rome. The senate received him with acclamations, and enjoined him to celebrate as his own the victory of Trajan over the Parthians; but this distinction he modestly declined, and the image of the great conqueror was borne in triumph to the temple of Jupiter. So far did he carry his moderation, as to remit to Italy entirely, and in part to the provinces also, the gift of *coronary gold*, usually presented to an emperor on the occasion of his triumph.[2]

He repairs to Rome, and celebrates Trajan's triumph.

[1] Spartian, *Hadr.* 5. The provinces abandoned by Hadrian were Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria. He still retained the district of Petra, to which Trajan had given the name of Arabia.

[2] A. Gellius, v. 6., explains, as an antiquary, the meaning of the "aurum coronarium." At first a crown, *i. e.* wreaths or chaplets of laurel were presented. This simple offering was afterwards exchanged for similar crowns in pure gold. Finally the crowns were commuted for a sum of money. The gift was originally a thank-offering from the conquered and spared. On the line of Virgil, "Dona recognoscit populorum," Servius remarks that this alludes to the "aurum coronarium." See more on the subject in Becker's *Alterthümer*, iii. 2. 211.

Hadrian had come indeed to Rome laden with the spoils of war, and the large sums at his disposal enabled him to extend his liberality with well-calculated profusion. Throughout the provinces administered by imperial prefects he remitted the arrears of taxes to the amount of seven millions of our money, and ostentatiously burnt the records of the debt in the Ulpian forum.[1] At the same time he relieved the local officers from the burden of maintaining the imperial posts, and laid the charge of this important department on the fiscus.[2] To these acts of munificence was added the dotation of noble but impoverished families, and numerous were the well-born Romans, both male and female, who were enabled by this bounty to maintain the dignity of office, or the decent comfort befitting their station. The alimentation of poor children, which we have noticed in preceding reigns, was extended or increased by fresh endowments. At a later period the authority of Hadrian was cited for the definition of eighteen years in males and fourteen in females, as the age to which this liberality should be extended.[3]

Alimentation of poor children.

[1] This statement is founded on a comparison of passages in Dion, lxix. 8.; Spartian, *Hadr.* 7 ; an inscription in Gruter's *Thesaurus*, and other collections, and a coin described by Spanheim, Eckhel, and others. There are certain difficulties connected with it as regards the time and the circumstances, which are carefully discussed by Gregorovius, *Gesch. Hadrians*, p. 17. foll. The sum remitted is stated in Roman money at "novies millies centena millia n." The arrears were for a period of sixteen years, and the date of the transaction was the second consulship of Hadrian, A. D. 118.

[2] It must be understood, however, that at this period there was no clear distinction between the Fiscus and the Ærarium The emperor had full command over the treasury of the senatorial provinces, as he had over the appointment of their officers. Dion, liii. 16. 22. ; Hegewisch, *Rœm. Finanzen*, p. 183.

[3] Spartian, *Hadrian*. 7. : "Pueris ac puellis, quibus etiam Trajanus alimenta detulerat, incrementum liberalitatis adjecit." From a notice in the *Digest*, xxxiv. 1. 14., it would seem that this increment was an extension of the age of the recipients "ut pueri ad xviii. puellæ ad xiv. annum alantur." It was affirmed by Hadrian's detractors

The dates of this reign uncertain.

Throughout the reign of Hadrian the series of events must be arranged,* in a great degree, from conjecture. We may suppose that he was detained for some months at least in the East after the death of Trajan, and that his progress towards Italy, when he at last set out, was retarded by the arrangements which it was requisite to make in the provinces through which he journeyed. If he reached Rome about the beginning of the year 118, his first residence in the city could not have been prolonged beyond a few months, and the career of liberality on which he entered was interrupted by the campaign which he found it necessary to undertake in person in the ensuing spring. The moment of his accession, as we have seen, was clouded with public anxiety. Besides the disturbances in the East, the peace of the empire seems to have been harassed by obscure outbreaks in Mauretania: the Caledonians in the north of Britain were assailing the outposts of the Roman power in that distant island, and in another quarter, equally remote from the Atlas and the Cheviots, from the Nile and the Euphrates, the wild Sarmatian horsemen were threatening to swim the frontier streams of Dacia and Mœsia. The conquest of Trajan beyond the Danube, fortified, garrisoned and colonized, offered an important bulwark against the rising tides of nomadic barbarism ever beating on the outworks of Roman civilization. Thrust forth into the heart of Europe, between Sarmatians on the east and Sarmatians on the west, the province of Dacia required to be strongly supported and firmly attached to the body of the empire against which it

Danger on the frontiers of Mauretania, Britain, and Dacia.

that for all his measures which he feared would be unpopular, he pretended to have express directions from Trajan; among these were the abandonment of the eastern provinces and the demolition, as it would seem, of the theatre which Trajan had himself commenced in the Campus Martius. Spartian, *Hadrian*. 9.

leaned. The genius, indeed, of the Dacians seems to have been peculiarly favourable to this alliance; for nowhere, as has been said, did the ideas and language of the conquerors strike root more rapidly or fix themselves more permanently. Roman citizens had already poured into the fertile plains of Hungary and Transylvania, and not only a multitude of Roman lives, but masses of Roman wealth and manifold interests, were protected by the constant presence of a large military force. But even Trajan had not disdained the precaution, before adopted by Domitian and Vespasian, of purchasing peace from the barbarians by gifts and subsidies. It had already become a practice on the frontiers to keep some of the neighbouring chiefs in pay, in order to restrain their hostility to Rome, and foster their mutual jealousies. The aggressions of the Roxolani on the Pruth or Dniester were caused, it seems, by a reduction of the tribute which they had hitherto received.[1] Swarms of horsemen crossed the rivers and swept over the plains, and though they could not stand the charge of the Roman soldiery, nor make dispositions for the permanent occupation of Roman territory, they spread terror and confusion among the defenceless inhabitants, and plundered their homesteads with impunity. The alarm reached Rome itself, and Hadrian paused in the midst of his administrative measures to put himself at the head of his forces, and prepare to take the field. Large masses of troops were directed to the Mœsian frontier, and Rome saw once more her prince go forth to distant warfare, the toils and perils of which were magnified by distance and obscurity. His back was no sooner turned than jealousies rankling against him broke out in a formidable conspiracy. When Hadrian commenced his

Aggressions of the Roxolani.

Hadrian takes the field against them.

[1] Spartian, *Hadr.* 6.: "Cum rege Roxolanorum, qui *de imminutis stipendiis* querebatur, cognito negotio pacem composuit."

career at Rome with such ostentatious generosity, he was anxious to disarm the foes, disguised but not unknown, who clustered around him. Lusius Quietus, Cornelius Palma, Nigrinus and Celsus, the chiefs of the army or the senate, all felt equally mortified by the elevation to which their former comrade had attained, which they ascribed neither to his merits, nor his connexion with their old master, but to a paltry intrigue. Our record of the affair is indeed confused and inconsistent. One account stated that it was plotted to cut off the emperor in hunting; another that Nigrinus purposed to kill him while sacrificing. The assassination was to be effected during his absence from Italy; but it was in Italy that the reported conspirators were seized, at four different spots; they were condemned and put to death by direction of the senate, and Hadrian, who had given the now customary promise never to exact the blood of a senator, could declare that their execution was without his orders, and against his wish.[1] But whatever were the actual circumstances of this event, we may conjecture that Hadrian's return was accelerated by it. Instead of plunging at the head of his troops into a career of fresh conquests, as his subjects may have anticipated, he refrained even from chastising the insults of the enemy, and was satisfied with repeating and perhaps increasing the bribes of his predecessors.[2] The Roxolani were induced to retire once more within their own lines, only to break out again at the next favourable opportunity. But Hadrian secured the tranquillity of Dacia, at

A conspiracy against him suppressed.

The Roxolani induced to retire.

[1] Spartian, *Hadr.* 7. This conspiracy may be dated A.D. 119, in Hadrian's third consulship. Euseb. *Chron.*

[2] Spartian, &c. *Hadr.* 6. The Roxolani lay to the east of Dacia; the Sarmatians are mentioned both to the east and to the west. The Iazyges (on the Theiss), who wanted to trade with the Roxolani, sought a passage through Dacia. Dion, lxxi. 19. It is said of the emperor Aurelius: *ἐφῆκεν αὐτοῖς πρὸς τοὺς Ῥοξολάνους διὰ τῆς Δακίας ἐπιμίγνυσθαι.*

least for a season, by placing in command there his trustiest officer, Martius Turbo, with extraordinary powers. The province continued to be held as an integral portion of the empire through many reigns, and we are at a loss to account for the common statement of the historians, that Hadrian contemplated its abandonment, not so much from the difficulty of keeping it, as from a petty jealousy of Trajan.[1] Dion, indeed, declares circumstantially that he destroyed the bridge over the Danube, to prevent the barbarians from crossing into Mœsia; and Dion had undoubtedly the means of ascertaining the truth, if he cared to employ them. But our acquaintance with this historian will not lead us to balance his word in such a case against the great improbability which lies on the face of the story.[2]

Hadrian's alleged intention of abandoning Dacia

Hadrian returned to Rome, pleased at least with the clear sweep which had been made of all his rivals, and well satisfied with the zeal the senate had shown in his behalf; yet not without apprehension of the grudge that might be felt against him for the shedding of so much noble blood. The removal of Attianus and Similis from the prætorian prefecture may have been meant to mark his pretended displeasure at this sacrifice. Both of them were trusty and able servants. The simple honesty of Similis was deemed worthy of special remembrance by the historians. Doubtless the sudden disgrace of

Hadrian courts the senate,

[1] Eutrop. viii 6.: "Qui Trajani gloriæ invidens statim provincias tres reliquit quas Trajanus addiderat (see above); . . . . idem de Dacia facere conatum amici deterruerunt."

[2] Dion, lxviii. 13.: ἀφεῖλε τὴν ἐπιπολῆς κατασκευήν. But this is not confirmed by Eutropius, from whom we may infer that Hadrian was deterred from abandoning the province by the claims of the Roman settlers on his protection; viii. 6. An inscription, said to have been discovered at Varhély, goes so far as to ascribe the conquest of the province to Hadrian. "Imp. . . . Hadriano . . . cujus virtute Dacia imperio addita felix est." Gruter, 249.; Gregorovius, p. 22. Eckhel seems to doubt its genuineness, vi. 494.

men so highly recommended helped to stamp on Hadrian a character for ingratitude and envy.[1] He repeated the assurance he had already given, that henceforth the life of a senator should be ever sacred in his eyes. The tokens of deference he showed to the order, the marked favour he bestowed on its most distinguished members, and the various popular decrees he issued, may probably be traced to this period, and to the anxiety he felt at this moment to conciliate the nobles of the city. *The emperor*, we read, *deigned to admit the best of the senators freely to his private society. He repudiated the games of the circus voted in his honour, excepting those on his own birthday only, and often declared in the curia that he would so govern the commonwealth that it should know that it belonged to the people, and not to himself. As he made himself consul thrice, so he advanced several personages to a third consulship; but the number to whom he granted a second was very considerable. His own third consulship he held for four months only, and in that time sat often in judgment. He always attended the regular meetings of the senate, whether within or without the city. He cherished highly the dignity of the order, making new members with difficulty; so much so, that when he thus advanced Attianus, who was already prefect of the prætorians, and enjoyed the triumphal ornaments, he showed that there was no higher eminence to which he could exalt him. He suffered not the knights to try the causes of senators, unless he were himself present; no, nor even then. For it had been the custom for the prince to take counsel with both senators and knights in such cases, and to deliver judgment after deliberating with them all in common. Finally, Hadrian expressed his detestation of princes who paid the senate less defer-*

[1] Spartian, *Hadrian*. 9.; Dion, lxix. 19.

ence than he showed himself. To Servianus, his sister's husband, whom he treated with such reverence as always to meet him when he issued from his chamber in the morning, he gave a third consulship unasked, taking care that it should not coincide with his own, that Servianus might never be required to speak second in debate.[1] This respect for the security and dignity of the Roman magnates was confirmed, as far as laws could confirm them, by a decree that the estates of criminals should no longer accrue to the imperial fiscus, but to the public treasury. Hadrian thus wisely put himself beyond the reach of temptation, beyond the suspicion of interest. The affluence he inherited from his father's conquests he maintained by his own discreet economy; for his expenditure, though ample and liberal as became him, seems to have been extravagant in no particular; even his buildings, however splendid and costly, were less various and less numerous than those of Trajan. On great occasions the shows with which he favoured the populace were conceived on a scale of unbounded magnificence. It is remarked that he exhibited combats of gladiators for six days in succession, and gave a birthday massacre of a thousand wild beasts; but such banquets of blood and treasure were apparently not repeated, and on the whole the attitude he assumed towards the people at their amusements was stern and reserved, rather than criminally indulgent.[2]

and the populace.

Such were the arts, easy to princes, by which Hadrian laid the basis of his power in the regard of the soldiers, the nobles, and the great body of the people. Succeeding to the most beloved of rulers, with an obedient army,

Hadrian's popular manners.

[1] Spartian, *Hadr.* 8.

[2] Spatian, *in Hadrian.* 7, 8. The birthday here specified was probably that which fell in the year 119, after Hadrian's return from Mœsia. The anniversary was the 4th of January, when he had just accepted his third consulship.

a contented nobility, and a well-stored treasury, his position was doubtless more than usually favourable. Nevertheless the temper and abilities he brought to the task were also admirably fitted for it. We may remark how little the consolidation of the monarchy had yet tended to separate the master from his subjects, and fix barriers of etiquette between them. The intercourse of Trajan with his friend Pliny, though disfigured by the extravagant forms of salutation adopted by the inferior, was substantially that of two companions in arts and arms in the time of the republic; it was less distant perhaps than that which had obtained between the proconsul in his province and the favoured subaltern of his cohort.

He betrays occasional jealousy and envy.

But Hadrian was distinguished, even beyond his predecessor, by the geniality of his temperament. Versed in all the knowledge of his era, he placed himself on an intimate footing with the ablest teachers and practitioners, and divided his smiles equally between senators like Fronto, and freedmen such as Favorinus the rhetorician, and the architect Apollodorus. He condescended, indeed, to enter into competition with the professors of eloquence and the fine arts; but here, though he did not require, like Nero, that his rivals should yield him the palm, he could not always control the irritability of his genius. It was well for those who could allow themselves to be worsted, and disguise at the same time the tameness of their surrender, as in the case of Favorinus, who, according to the well-known story, yielded a strong position to his imperial antagonist, and replied to the inquiry of a surprised bystander, *why he defended himself so feebly?* that *it is ill arguing with the master of thirty legions.*[1] Other opponents, however, were less

[1] Spartian, *Hadr.* 15. This phlegmatic philosopher used to pique himself on three paradoxes of fortune: *Γαλάτης ὢν Ἑλληνίζειν, εὐνοῦχος ὢν μοιχείας κρίνεσθαι, βασιλεῖ διαφέρεσθαι καὶ ζῆν.* Philostr. *Vit. Sophist.*

obliging. Hadrian, it is said, continued after his accession to retain a grudge against Apollodorus for having derided his early efforts in painting. He was bent on proving himself a greater architect than the master of the art. When about to construct his magnificent temple of Rome and Venus, he produced a design of his own, and showed it with proud satisfaction to Apollodorus. The creator of the Trajan column remarked with a sneer that the deities, if they rose from their seats, must thrust their heads through the ceiling. The emperor, we are assured, could not forgive this banter, which was at least unbecoming; but we need hardly take to the letter the statement that he put his critic to death for it.[1] Towards the close of his career, indeed, Hadrian became, as we shall see, captious and jealous of those around him; but such cold-blooded barbarity is little in accordance with his usual temper. To his many accomplishments he added, on the whole, an affability rarely seen in the Roman princes, such as may remind us of the best days of the republic, when the demeanour of the noble towards his client was marked with peculiar courtesy and forbearance, secured by the general sobriety of his manners and the refined dignity of his breeding.

Hadrian undertakes to make himself personally acquainted with all the provinces.

Hadrian's third consulship commenced with the year 119, and he retained it for four months, in which interval he returned from his Sarmatian expedition, amused and flattered the senators in the city, and prepared for more extended movements. From this period the only history of this emperor, and of his times, is the re-

i 8. For other anecdotes of the same kind about Hadrian see this writer also, *Vit. Sophist.* i. 22.

[1] Dion, lxix. 4.: καὶ οὔτε τὴν ὀργὴν οὔτε τὴν λύπην κάτεσχεν, ἀλλ' ἐφόνευσεν αὐτόν. The reader who has attended to the character of this writer's statements throughout this history will be always ready to allow for his malignant credulity.

cord, confused and imperfect both in dates and circumstances, of his journeys through every province of his empire, broken only by occasional sojourns at his provincial capitals, till he finally settled for his last few years at Rome. It was his object, partly from policy, but more perhaps from the restless curiosity of his disposition, to inspect every corner of his dominions, to examine in person its state and resources, to make himself acquainted with its wants and capabilities, and with the administrative processes applied to it. Curious also about the character of men, he studied on the spot the temper, the abilities, the views and feelings of the multitude of officials with whom he had ordinarily to correspond at a distance, upon whom he had to impress his own views of government, to whom he had to declare his pleasure by the rescripts which became thenceforth the laws of the empire. There is something sublime in the magnitude of the task he thus imposed on himself; nor are the zeal and constancy with which he pursued it less extraordinary. If other chiefs of wide-spread empires have begun with the same bold and generous conception of their duty, it may be doubted whether any have so persevered through a period of twenty years.

His assiduity in performing the duties of a military chief, and in maintaining discipline.

It may be observed, moreover, that there was something in the carriage required of a Roman Imperator little consistent with such active and prying curiosity. The dignity of his military character was hedged round by formalities and decorums, on which the haste and excitement of the traveller and sight-seer would rudely infringe. Yet among the merits which the historians recognise in Hadrian, was one which they could have learnt only from his officers and soldiers, his assiduity in performing the duties of a commander. Hadrian, it was allowed, maintained in its full vigour the discipline of Trajan. He was con-

stantly seen, throughout his progresses, at the head of his legions, sometimes on horseback, but more commonly on foot, marching steadily with them twenty miles a day, and always bareheaded; for if the Roman soldier was permitted to relieve himself on march of the weight of his helmet, he might not replace it with the effeminate covering of a cap or bonnet. He inspected day by day the camps and lines of his garrisons, examined their arms and machines of war, their tents, huts, and hospitals, as well as their clothes and rations, tasting himself their black bread, their lard and cheese, their sour wine or vinegar. These attentions ingratiated him with the soldiers, and made them tolerant of his severe demands on their patience and activity. He constantly passed his troops in review, and encouraged them by his own example to submit to the ever-recurring drill which was necessary to maintain their efficiency. He restored or enforced the regulations of the tacticians, and, while he sedulously avoided war on the frontiers, kept all his legions in a state of preparedness for war. With this view he strictly repressed the indulgences both of men and officers, in respect to dwellings, furniture, and equipments, and cut off the luxurious appliances with which they sought to relieve the hardships or tedium of their protracted exile. An important testimony to the value of his exertions is borne by the historian Dion, who, writing at least eighty years later, says that the rules established by Hadrian remained in force down to his own days.[1]

[1] Dion, lxix. 9. Comp. Spartian, *in Hadrian.* 10. Vegetius, a writer of the fourth century, says (i. 27.): "Præterea et vetus consuetudo permansit, et D. Augusti atque Hadriani constitutionibus præcavetur, ut ter in mense tam equites quam pedites educantur ambulatum." This tension of discipline seems to be commemorated on the coins of Hadrian which bear the legend *Disciplin. Aug.* Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.* vi. 503. Victor remarks more generally: "Officia publica et palatina, nec non militiæ, in eam formam statuit quæ paucis per Constantinum immutatis hodie perseverant." *Epit.* 28.

Hadrian's progress into Gaul and Germany.

Even before his elevation to power, Hadrian's active career had led him into most of the provinces. The regions of the North-west were among those with which he was least acquainted, and in these his presence was more especially required to maintain the authority of the conquerors. On quitting Rome he directed his course through Gaul, and reached the Germanic provinces on the Rhine, where he showed himself to the barbarians from the ramparts of Moguntiacum or Colonia. *He set a king over the Germans*, says Spartianus, with excessive and indeed culpable brevity; but the oracle admits neither of expansion nor explanation.[1] We are wholly ignorant of the attitude assumed by the German tribes towards Rome at this moment, and of their relations to one another. We can only suppose that the chief whom Hadrian established on his throne was pledged, and possibly subsidized, to restrain the nations that bordered on the rampart of Trajan; and we may believe that, not trusting entirely to this safeguard, the emperor prolonged or strengthened that great barrier. His care, indeed, extended to the whole line of the German frontier. The foundation of a colony at Juvavium, or Salzburg, which received the name of Forum Hadriani, attests the vigilance which directed his view from the Rhine to the Salza, and the taste, I would willingly add, which selected for a town to bear his name, the most enchanting site in central Europe.

Progress into Britain, A.D. 119.

From Gaul Hadrian passed over into Britain. Of the movements in that province which required his presence we have no account; but since Trajan's death an outbreak of some importance had occurred; for in the cursory allusion to it which alone remains the losses of Rome from the Britons are placed in the same line with

[1] Spartian, *Hadr.* 12.: "Germanis regem constituit."

those she suffered from the Jews.[1] The conquest of the southern portion of the island had been effected, as we have seen, with rapidity, though not unchequered by reverses. Commenced by Plautius and Ostorius, confirmed by Suetonius, and consolidated by Agricola, it had been accepted from henceforth without an audible murmur by the natives, who indemnified themselves for their evil fortune, if evil it was, by cultivating the arts of their conquerors, and declining to renew an unavailing struggle. The rapid advance of Roman civilization astonished the Romans themselves. They pictured the furthest Orkneys prostrate before them, and Shetland inviting a southern sophist to instruct her in polished letters.[2] In no part of their dominions, however, had the happy results of peace and security shown themselves in fairer colours. The building of cities, the cultivation of the land, the construction of roads, the erection of neat or voluptuous pleasure-houses, had converted the lair of Cæsar's painted savages into an Italian garden. Already the warm and mineral springs had been discovered, which still draw our health-seekers to Bath and Clifton, to Cheltenham and Matlock; the tin, copper, and silver ores of Devon had been worked with method and perseverance; the iron of Gloucestershire and Sussex, the lead of Yorkshire, Derbyshire, and Salop, the coal of Wales, Staffordshire and Durham, had all been brought into requisition, to supply the most

Flourishing state of the province.

[1] Fronto, fragm. *de Bell. Parth.* 322.: "Quid, avo vestro Hadriano imperium obtinente, quantum militum a Judæis, quantum a Britannis cæsum!"

[2] Juvenal, ii. *in fin.*: "Arma quidem ultra Litora Juvernæ promovimus et modo captas Orcadas;" xv. 112.: "De conducendo loquitur jam rhetore Thule." Martial, vii. 10.: "Dicitur et nostros cantare Britannia versus." Tacitus, a graver authority, speaks not less pointedly (*Agric.* 21.): "Jam vero principum filios liberalibus artibus erudire, et *ingenia* Britannorum *studiis* Gallorum anteferre, ut qui modo linguam Romanam abnuebant, eloquentiam concupiscerent."

essential wants of a thriving population, and to pour their surplus into the imperial treasury.[1] Britain had her own potteries and glass-houses; she grew large quantities of grain adapted to her climate, and exported corn and cattle, as well as handsome slaves, to the markets of the continent. No Roman province was more self-supporting, or more capable, as she proved, at least for a moment, at a later period, of asserting her independence. All this material progress had been made with little direct instruction or aid from her conquerors; for Britain contained, as far as we know, but one, or at most three colonies of Roman citizens[2]; her invaders were still encamped on her soil as soldiers in arms, and had not yet laid down their swords to assume the implements of peace. Meanwhile the greatest sphere of British energy and activity seems to have lain in the northern rather than in the southern parts of England. Cornwall and Devonshire, and even Kent and Sussex, were left in great measure under the dominion of the primeval

[1] Ptolemy, writing in the age of Hadrian, gives a list of fifty towns in Southern Britain. Coins of the early emperors from Claudius downwards have been found in various localities. Inscriptions on pigs of lead, &c. refer to the reigns of Claudius, Vespasian and Domitian. The account of our island in the text is taken from my general reading on the subject, and I think it will be fully borne out by Mr. Wright's excellent "Handbook of Britain," to which he gives the title of "The Kelt, the Roman, and the Saxon." The greatest stores of original information on the subject of Roman-British archæology may be found in the *Collectanea Antiqua* of Mr. Roach Smith, and in Dr. Bruce's interesting work on the Roman Wall.

[2] The only colony in the proper sense of which we can speak with certainty is that of Claudius at Camulodunum (Colchester). But Isca Silurum (Caerleon), and Deva (Chester), are also enumerated by the antiquaries as permanent military stations, and possibly are found so entitled on inscriptions. There is said to be the authority of an inscribed stone for Glevum (Gloucester) also; and Lincoln is sometimes added to the list of colonies from the name only. The pretended Richard of Cirencester adds Londinium (London), Rutupiæ (Richborough), Aquæ Solis (Bath), and Camboricum (Cambridge). This statement is of no authority. Londinium and Verulamium were municipia in the time of Tacitus, and so probably was Eboracum.

forest, while Eboracum or York seems to have been the chief city of the province, and the resources of the country round it to have been most thoroughly explored and utilized. A stimulus, no doubt, was given in this quarter to productions of all kinds by the presence of the local government, and of the legions which maintained it. Eboracum was the seat of the prefect with his official staff, and the ministers of his luxury, while Londinium was still a mere resort of traders.[1] The northern limit of the province was as yet imperfectly defined. Agricola's chain of forts between the Clyde and Forth was held by the most advanced battalions; but while many Roman settlers had planted themselves beyond the Cheviots, and even beyond the Forth, the camps he had previously traced between the Tyne and Solway formed a stronger bulwark; and this lower line of fortifications commanded more respect than the upper from the roaming tribes of Caledonia, ever on the watch to harry the homesteads of the intruders. The line of the Tyne formed practically the limit of Roman civilization, and the settlers who dwelt within range of the barbarians, constantly subject to attacks, and ever appealing to the prefect for protection, had recently suffered, as I imagine, from an assault of more than ordinary ferocity, and had

Limit of Roman civilization in the North.

[1] Among the innumerable remains of Roman villas discovered in this island, there is none, I believe, that has revealed by a fragment of inscription the name and quality of its owner. We do not know whether the Roman civilian of fortune was in the habit of making his residence in the country districts. Our Roman villas seem to have been generally placed in the vicinity of military stations, and may have been the pleasure-houses of the officers. The designs of their mosaics, as far as they have been discovered, are said to be limited to two subjects, that of Neptune and the marine divinities, and that of Orpheus: the one being an allusion to our insular position, the other to the progress of civilization among us. The subject of Orpheus is specially appropriated to eating-rooms. The Roman banquet, with its music, its recitations, and the bath which preceded it, was a type of the highest advance in social cultivation:

"Cædibus et victu fœdo deterruit Orpheus." Hor. *Ars Poet.* 392.

engaged the presidiary cohorts in a bootless and calamitous campaign. The time was come when it was necessary to specify more accurately the limits within which the protection of Rome could be fairly required and substantially afforded.

Fortification of the upper isthmus between the Tyne and Solway.

In the absence of historical statements we can only conjecture that Hadrian took his survey of the state of the British province from Eboracum, and that he crossed the Tyne in person at the spot where the Ælian bridge was constructed, which gave its name to the military post by which he secured it.[1] Of his further progress northward there is no trace perhaps remaining; but it is not improbable that he extended his personal exploration to the Frith of Forth, before he finally determined to place the bulwark of the empire on the lower isthmus. The neck of land which separates the Solway from the German Ocean is about sixty miles in width, and is singularly well adapted for the site of a defensive barrier. The Tyne and Irthing flowing in opposite directions, east and west, through deep valleys, present in themselves no trifling obstacles to a barbarian foe, and the tract of land which separates and screens their sources is lofty and precipitous towards the north. The base of this mountain ridge was then lost also for the most part in swamps, and wherever the cliff was broken by rugged defiles, access to them was obstructed by dense forests. This advantageous position had been seized by Agricola, and though his energies impelled him farther northward, he did not neglect to secure it as a base of operations, by the construction of numerous forts, or entrenched camps, which he placed generally on the southern slope of his mountain ramparts. These posts were connected by a military way, and in them the reserves of the presidiary force were permanently

[1] Pons Ælii of the "Notitia Imperii" is amply identified with Newcastle-on-Tyne by inscriptions.

collected, while a few cohorts were advanced to the extreme boundary of the province on the upper isthmus of Clyde and Forth. Hadrian determined to follow out on this spot the same discreet and moderate policy he had established elsewhere. Without formally withdrawing his outposts, or denuding of all protection the provincials, who had settled under their wing, he drew from the Tyne to the Solway the ostensible frontier of his dominions. He connected the camps of Agricola with a fosse and palisaded rampart of earth, adding subsidiary entrenchments, so as to strengthen the work with a fortified station at every fourth or fifth mile.[1] The execution of this stupendous undertaking may have occupied the troops and their native assistants for several years; but the chiefs of the empire regarded it as so important for the security of the province, that they continued from time to time to supply additional defences. Severus, two generations later, may be supposed to have thrown up the second line of earthworks which runs parallel to those of Hadrian, and is evidently formed to support them; and finally the stupendous wall of solid masonry, of which some fragmentary sections still remain, running as an exterior bulwark a few yards to the northward from end to end, may be ascribed, as I venture to think, most probably, neither to Hadrian nor Severus, but to the age of Theodosius and Stilicho.[2] Mean-

Works of Hadrian, of Severus, and of the age of Theodosius

[1] Spartian, *Hadr.* 11.: "Murum per octoginta millia passuum primus duxit, qui barbaros Romanosque divideret." By "murus" I understand the earthen rampart which still exists, and may be traced over a great part of this line. Comp. the same author's account in c. 12. of the usual character of Hadrian's presidiary works: "Per ea tempora et alias frequenter in plurimis locis in quibus barbari non fluminibus sed limitibus dividuntur, stipitibus magnis in modum muralis sepis funditus jactis atque connexis, barbaros separavit."

[2] This is not the place to enter into the reasoning with which I have suggested this solution in the *Quarterly Review* for Jan. 1860. The texts of Dion and the Augustan History, which are cited to prove the stone wall to be the work of Hadrian or Severus, may very well refer to the earthen ramparts only.

while the camps which Agricola had planted on the bleak rocks and moors of Northumbria, budded, in the course of ages, into little towns, fenced with stone walls, adorned with halls and temples, and on their monuments were engraved the names of prefects and centurions, as well as of all the gods and goddesses of the cosmopolitan Olympus of the second and third centuries. We know from written records that the troops by which these strongholds were occupied represented from twenty to thirty distinct nations. Along this line of mutual communication Gauls and Germans, Thracians and Iberians, Moors and Syrians, held the frontiers of the Roman empire against the Caledonian Britons. Here some thirty languages resounded from as many camps; but the sonorous speech of Latium, not much degraded from the tone still preserved on its native soil, ever maintained its supremacy as the language of command and of every official and public document. On this narrow strip of land we may read an epitome of the history of the Romans under the Empire: for myself, I feel that all I have read and written on this wide and varied subject, is condensed, as it were, in the picture I realize, from a few stones and earthworks, of their occupation of our northern marches.[1]

By this formidable barrier the incursions of the Caledonians were effectually restrained, and the support of the large force which held it encouraged the Romans settlers to plant themselves on every eligible spot throughout the lowlands even beyond it. Though the region which stretches between the two isthmuses was not yet incorporated in the Roman dominions, or reduced to the form of a province, the immigrants

[1] Though I hesitate to accept Dr. Bruce's conclusions as to the origin and author of the Wall, I feel not the less how deeply the students of history are indebted to the ability with which he has investigated the remains connected with his subject, and produced in his instructive monograph a vivid picture of the Roman domination in Britain, which is in fact a type of that domination throughout the provinces.

from the south felt sufficiently secure in the protection of Hadrian's lines below, and Agricola's forts above them. Four legions continued to occupy the possessions of the empire in the island, and the equanimity with which the southern Britons bore the yoke might allow a large portion of their force to encamp in front of the barbarians on the Tyne and Clyde. The duration of Hadrian's residence hardly admits of conjecture; it would seem however, from a very enigmatical statement of Spartianus, that he brought over the empress to Britain, and probably established his court there for the winter of 119–120. The terms on which he lived with Sabina were never cordial; he scarcely refrained, it is said, from putting her to death, and declared at least that, had he been in a private station, he would have divorced her; and she reciprocated this dislike, if not with acts of infidelity, with expressions of bitter hatred. Nevertheless, she seems to have been the companion of his journeys, not in Britain only, but elsewhere; and it was during her sojourn here with him that he disgraced his prefect Septicius Clarus, and his secretary Suetonius Tranquillus, for showing her disrespect.[1] That she had, indeed, much cause to complain of his vicious indulgences, must be freely admitted. His detractors asserted that in the gratification of his passions he disregarded the ties of friendship also; while his jealousy or curiosity led him to violate the common rules of honour, in prying into private correspondence.[2]

Hadrian in Britain, A.D. 119, 120. A.U. 872, 873.

[1] Septicius had succeeded to Attianus as prefect of the prætorians; but during the emperor's travels his place was not at the palace, but at the prætorium, whether in the camp or elsewhere. Suetonius is the same to whose valuable biography of the first twelve Cæsars we are so much indebted. As the disgraced minister of Hadrian we can easily imagine that he gave currency to the worst stories against him. The account, however, of Spartian is, as I have said in the text, very enigmatical: "Qui apud Sabinam uxorem, *injussu ejus*, familiarius se tunc egerant quam reverentia domus aulicæ postulabat."

[2] Spartian, *Hadr. l. c.*

From Britain the emperor directed his progress to the South-west. In the course of a second journey through Gaul, he commanded, among other acts of munificence and splendour, the erection of a basilica at Nemausus, in honour of his benefactress, Plotina, who seems to have died at this period.[1] The next step in his pilgrimage brought him into Spain, which he probably reached by sea, effecting his landing at Tarraco, where he passed the ensuing winter.[2] Here he convened an assembly of the Iberian states, not to deliberate, but to receive from his own mouth the imperial decrees regarding military enlistment. The provincials, it seems, but more particularly the colonists from Rome and Italy, had ventured to resist the usual levy of men for service; but the emperor's measures, urged with caution and judgment, overcame their opposition. An instance of Hadrian's good sense and temper is here cited. While walking one day in the garden of his host's abode, a slave suddenly ran upon him with a drawn sword. The man was seized, and was found on examination to be insane. The emperor, who had shown the utmost presence of mind, insisted that he should not be punished, and handed him over to the physicians. At Tarraco he restored the temple of Augustus; but his services to the province were no doubt more important and extensive, and we find upon his medals, struck in this country, the legend which indeed accompanies him throughout his imperial progresses,

Hadrian visits Spain. A. D. 120.

[1] Of this basilica there are no remains. The famous temple or Maison-carrée is of a later date. We do not know of any connexion between Plotina and the town of Nemausus. Possibly she may have attended Hadrian in some part of his journeys, and have died there. But Nemausus was the native place of the family of Antoninus, whom Hadrian afterwards adopted, and whom he had advanced in this year (120) to the consulship.

[2] This, as I imagine, was the winter of 120–121; but neither Clinton nor Gregorovius ventures to determine the date.

the *Restorer* of Spain. Though he did not care to visit the ancient seat of his family on the banks of the Bætis, he enriched it with presents and endowments.

Mauretania had never yet been honoured with the presence of a Roman emperor. Hadrian crossed the Mediterranean, and occupied himself in person with tranquillizing disturbances which had broken out in that remote dependency, connected perhaps with the treasonable intrigues of Lusius. The movement, whatever its origin or nature, was deemed by the senate of sufficient importance to be signalized by a Supplication.[1]

He visits Mauretania.

A much longer stride bore him next to the opposite extremity of the empire; and it is with some surprise and perplexity that we hear of his suddenly appearing on the borders of Parthia. The policy of Chosroes, it seems, was dubious, and the state of the eastern provinces was at this moment precarious. An effort was required to confirm the rival monarch in his alliance, and Hadrian, averse even to a mere demonstration of force, sought to secure his influence in a personal interview.[2] The result seems to have fully justified the judgment which dictated this proceeding. The Parthian desisted from any attempt to embroil the dominions of the Roman potentate, and the two empires continued throughout the reign of Hadrian on terms of peace and mutual forbearance. From Syria the emperor returned homeward through the province of Asia Minor, and touched at some islands in the Ægean, on his route to Athens. At

Hadrian on the frontiers of Parthia, whence he repairs to Athens. A. D. 122, 123.

[1] Spartian, *Hadrian.* 12.: "Motus Maurorum compressit et a senatu supplicationes emeruit." The title of "Restorer of Mauretania," which appears on his coins, may refer to the revived security of the Roman colonists.

[2] Spartian, *in Hadrian.* 12.: "Bellum Parthicum per idem tempus in motu tantum fuit; idque Hadriani colloquio repressum est."

the Grecian capital he made a more lengthened sojourn, commencing new edifices for its decoration, and presiding at its festivals.[1] But Rome was still the goal of his long and circuitous progress, and hither he once more bent his steps, with but one short digression to visit Sicily, and witness a sunrise from the summit of Etna. From Rome, however, he crossed the sea to Carthage, and conferred many benefits on the province of Africa. The people there bestowed on him the usual compliments in return, and ascribed to his auspicious advent the copious fall of rain which at last, after a five years' interval, bedewed their arid country.[2] From Africa he retraced his voyage to Rome.

Returns to Rome, and visits Sicily and Carthage, A. D. 123.

None perhaps of our princes, says Spartian at this juncture, *ever traversed so rapidly so large a portion of the world.* Hadrian seems to have generally alternated a period of residence in winter with another, perhaps a longer, period of locomotion in the summer. The visit to Africa may fill the interval between two winters passed in Rome. The chronologists at least assure us that he was at Athens in the year 125, on his way, as we are informed by Spartian, to the East.[3] This was the commencement of what is generally designated as Hadrian's Second Progress, which embraced the greater part of his subsequent reign, and included more than one long residence at Athens, with sojourns

Hadrian's second progress, A. D. 125–134.

[1] At Athens Hadrian may have passed the winter of 122–123. Clinton, from Euseb. *Chronicon.*

[2] Spartian, *Hadrian.* 13. 22.: "Post quinquennium pluit; atque ideo ab Africanis dilectus est."

[3] Clinton from Eusebius. Spartian, *Hadrian.* 13. I suppose the winters 123–124, 124–125 to have been passed at Rome: the second being subsequent to the return from Africa. I must allow, however, that Spartian says: "Cum post Africam Romam redisset *statim* ad Orientem profectus per Athenas iter fecit." The word "statim" may indeed mean, "as soon as ever the next season for travelling arrived." But the chronology of Eusebius would allow of Hadrian passing this winter, 124–125, at Athens.

of some duration at Antioch and Alexandria. It was not till the year 134 that he returned finally to Rome, and it seems impossible to reduce to consecutive order our meagre notices of these various peregrinations. The most interesting incidents in this career refer to his abode at Athens and Alexandria. We have sufficient authority to fix his residence in the Egyptian capital to the year 131, and I imagine that, down to the year preceding, he was for the most part domiciled in his favourite Athens. The events of the Jewish wars carried him probably to Syria in 132, and from thence, as we may infer, he conducted his second negotiations with Parthia, and there invited the attendance of the chiefs of the Armenian border-land. He was unquestionably at Athens once more at the end of 133, and there passed one winter, and his final return to Italy, which he seems never again to have quitted, may thus be assigned, as before said, to the year 134. But the political events of this period are either insignificant, or have been already anticipated; and we may take this opportunity to cast an eye on the moral and social spectacles presented by the great cities of Athens and Alexandria, the rival universities of the Roman world.

His residence at Alexandria and Athens.

However numerous and magnificent were the buildings of Trajan, he must yield the palm, with every other imperial builder, to Hadrian, who possessed the taste, and had acquired even the technical knowledge of an architect, and enjoyed, as no architect before or since, the means and opportunity of executing his own favourite conceptions. In Greece, as elsewhere, the works by which this prince obtained the title of Restorer, were not confined to political and social improvements, but referred more commonly to the creation of solid and material monuments, to the erection of aqueducts and baths, temples and libraries,

Works of Hadrian for the embellishment of Athens.

and the disposition of streets, squares, and public places. The ancient city of Pericles had suffered for ages a gradual decline in wealth and population. The sack under Sulla was a blow from which a community in decay, sustained by no provincial dependencies, could with difficulty recover; and it was only the peculiar advantage it possessed, as the home of arts and learning, and the object of special solicitude and veneration to liberal minds, that enabled the seat of the Muses to retain its place at the head of Academic institutions. But the halls and temples which had adorned the free state with the purest models of architectual embellishment still towered above the city and the plain in their graceful forms and noble proportions; though repeatedly despoiled of more portable works of art, not the temples and halls only, but the streets and forums still glistened with exquisite figures in brass or marble; the shapely block of the Theseum was rooted in the soil of which it seems even now a natural product, and the figure of protecting Pallas still stood, where it stands no longer, on the steadfast throne of the Acropolis.[1] In better times, besides its public buildings, Athens was noted for the splendour of many private dwellings: the well-known features of the Roman mansion, with its sumptuous array of central court and surrounding dwelling-rooms, were modelled, with allowance for the difference of Eastern and Western manners, on the type of the Grecian and Athenian. The Eupatridæ of Athens, indeed, had never rivalled the Roman patricians in the splendour of their lodging, as they

[1] The account of Pausanias, a few years later, shows how Athens then abounded in ancient temples and works of art. Whatever may have been the spoliations of the old Roman proconsuls, and at a later period of Nero, we may observe that this writer specifies many works of Phidias, Praxiteles, and other illustrious artists, as still visible at Athens. Most of these, however, were of marble, only one or two of gold or silver. The cupidity of the conquerors had been tempted by the precious material rather than the precious workmanship.

had never equalled them in wealth, and the number of the rich among the inhabitants of the Grecian city was doubtless much smaller than at Rome. The poorer classes at Athens were not the clients of the wealthy, and their humble tenements were not, I suppose, clustered around the walls of the noble mansion, but stood each apart in all their poverty and nakedness. Nor was the meanness of each separate cabin carried off, as at Rome, by the aggregation of house upon house, for they were generally of a single floor, and it was only in their material—for no material at Athens was readier than stone or even marble —that they excelled the most squalid den of the Roman proletary. The Athenians were, moreover, a far less cleanly people than the Romans, and as they were less luxurious in their personal ablutions, they held, it may be presumed, in less honour the neatness of their dwellings and their streets.[1] We must picture Athens to ourselves, at this period, as a dirty city in decay: we must imagine the combination of a site of unrivalled magnificence, of mingled slope and level, formed by nature for enhancing to the utmost the graces and harmonies of constructive art, with a throng of mouldering fanes and neglected mansions, which alternated, along its straggling avenues, with

[1] See Leake's *Topogr. of Athens*, App. "On the Supply of Water," vol. ii.; also Dr. Smith's excellent article on "Athens" in the *Dict. of Class. Geography*, with his references to Aristophanes, Dicæarchus, and especially to Strabo, v. p. 235. From the former writers we learn, as might be supposed, that there was much washing connected with the usages of the palæstra; but the latter, even before the era of the great constructions of Nero, Titus, and Caracalla, contrasts the lavatory resources of Rome with those of Grecian cities generally. Rain-water was probably collected in tanks, and the limestone rock on which Athens is situated, was apparently perforated with channels which brought supplies from more distant reservoirs and fountains. The dust of the modern city is described as intolerable. Hadrian constructed the only aqueduct. There were three or four springs in the city, but one only, that of Callirrhoe, was drinkable, and this, for a population computed by Böckh, under the free state, at 180,000! *Publ. Econ. of Athens*, i. 56.

low and squalid cabins, scarcely raised above the filth and rottenness accumulated around them; on which every rent and stain of time was rendered painfully conspicuous by a sun of unclouded splendour, except when obscured by whirlwinds of dust, generated on the bare limestone rock, treeless, grassless, and waterless.[1] Hadrian may have done for Athens what Nero did for Rome, in reconstructing large portions of the city in the open and luxurious style of Antioch and Ephesus. One quarter, which he either wholly rebuilt, or so beautified that it might pass for his own building, received, at least in popular language, the designation of Hadrianopolis; and on the gate which led into it from the ancient city were inscriptions purporting to distinguish the town of Theseus from the town of Hadrian.[2] He may have repaired and cleansed the public buildings: but the barbaric intermixture of splendour and squalor which characterizes a declining community could hardly be effaced by the most liberal encouragement to monumental magnificence. Temples of Zeus and Here rose at his command in connexion with the names of the emperor and the empress, and another fane, inscribed to *All the Gods*, may have been designed to emulate the Roman Pantheon.[3] But of all these gorgeous

[1] It is fortunate, perhaps, that nothing is told us of the drainage of Athens; no great city was ever so badly placed for due abstersion by natural outfall. The brook Ilissus was a mere open sewer which stagnated in a marsh. No wonder that the poets avoid all allusion to it. Statius, only, says of it most heedlessly: "Ilissus multa *purgavit lumina* lympha." *Theb.* viii. extr. Even Socrates took his friend to its banks above the city. Plato, *Phædr* init.

[2] The arch is still existing, and is reputed to have great architectural merit. The inscriptions are: *αἵ δ' εἰσ' Ἀδριανοῦ κοὐχὶ Θησέως πόλις*, on the one side: *αἵ δ' εἰσ' Ἀθῆναι Θησέως ἡ πρὶν πόλις* on the other. Gruter. *Inscript.* p. 1078. 1.; Gregorovius, *Gesch. Hadr.* p. 205.

[3] Pausan. *Attic.* 18. 9.: *Ἀδριανὸς δὲ κατεσκευάσατο μὲν καὶ ἄλλα Ἀθηναίοις, ναὸν Ἥρας, καὶ Διὸς Πανελληνίου, καὶ θεοῖς τοῖς πᾶσιν ἱερὸν κοινόν . . . . . Ἀθῆναι μὲν οὕτως ὑπὸ τοῦ πολέμου κακωθεῖσαι τοῦ Ῥωμαίων αὖθις Ἀδριανοῦ βασιλεύοντος ἤνθησαν.* At Athens and elsewhere this emperor is said to have erected temples without any image

structures none was so illustrious as the Olympieum, the great national temple of the Hellenic Jupiter, commenced on a scale far transcending any monument of Greek or Roman piety by the aspiring genius of Pisistratus. The work had languished through the ages of Athenian independence. The bold conception was revived by the usurper Epiphanes, and the temple, profaned and rifled by the brutal violence of Sulla, was restored and carried a stage nearer to completion by Augustus, aided by the contributions of eastern potentates.[1] Still the Olympieum stood a colossal fragment, embracing within the limits of its columned precincts an area of two hundred yards square, in which it precisely corresponded with the temple of Jerusalem. But the fane itself far exceeded in magnitude its eastern rival, its dimensions being 171 feet in width and 354 in depth, while its columns rose to the enormous height of 60 feet and upwards. Such at least was the design, still unfinished, which Hadrian undertook to complete, in its full proportions. Among the decorations of this marvellous edifice, in which sculpture, painting, and gilding bore a part, were numerous statues of the imperial builder himself, placed as votive offerings by states and sovereigns. But the king of gods and men occupied the cell in a glorious image of gold and ivory, which emulated the masterpiece of Phidias at Olympia. This combination of materials may seem grotesque to our uneducated eyes; but the Greeks had cultivated their taste in the application

of a god. It was believed that he meant them to be dedicated to himself. At a later period the Christians imagined that he had intended them for the pure worship of Jesus. Lampridius in *Alex. Sever.* 41. It is most likely that these ideas were founded merely on some casual or temporary omission. According to Spartian, however, Hadrian set up an altar to his own divinity at Athens, and in Asia at least he did not scruple to build himself temples. Spartian, *Hadr.* 13.

[1] See vol. iv. ch. xxxiii.

of colour to statuary, and they had learnt to estimate, perhaps not unduly, the beauty of the soft warm tint which the glowing metal may cast over the paler substance.[1]

The Athenians requite him with the title of Olympius.

Vehement was the gratitude of the Athenians for the accomplishment of a work which placed their city once more at the summit of architectural splendour; but there was little that they could offer in return to the master of the Roman world. The title of Archon, by which their first municipal officer was still designated, whose functions were religious rather than political, carried with it only the charm of its antique associations. Such as it was, however, it seems to have been tendered to Hadrian at a much earlier time, when, as a mere private visitor, yet unconnected with the reigning family, he had displayed his interest in Athens by devoting himself to her special studies. The style of Olympius, which they now appended to his name on coins and marbles, bore a direct reference to the munificence with which he had lodged the lord of heaven in the most sumptuous of earthly habitations; but it conveyed, no doubt, an indirect compliment of another kind; for Pericles, the greatest of their historic heroes, had been styled Olympian, for the thunders of his eloquence, and the overwhelming power he wielded in the state.

Athens the great university of the Roman world.

Athens still maintained her pre-eminence as the mistress of eloquence and learning. Athens was the ancient classic university of the civilized world. The

[1] Pausan. *Attic.* 18. 6, 7. The painting of statues, and the mixture of metals used for them, had often a conventional meaning. Thus Pliny, xxxiv. 40., says of a certain artist: "Æs ferrumque miscuit, ut rubigine ejus per nitorem oris relucente exprimeretur verecundiæ rubor." See on this subject Feuerbach, *der Vatican. Apollo*, p. 184. foll. The reflection of gold on ivory imparted a warm tint, and the appearance of a supernatural body: at least such was the understanding between the artist and the more enlightened of the worshippers.

splendour of an individual reputation might suffice to found an academy at other places of educational resort; the disciples of a popular rhetorician or philosopher might maintain for two or more generations the school of which he had laid the foundations; but the ephemeral brilliancy of Rhodes, Tarsus, or Halicarnassus, was lost in the constant and steady light which had beamed for five centuries from the halls of Plato and Aristotle. While hundreds of erudite professors of every art, and of all learning, wandered from the centre of ancient discipline to instruct in their own homes the patrician youth of Italy and the provinces, mankind still recognised in undiminished force the necessity of a course of study at Athens itself, to equip the complete scholar and gentleman, the most accomplished product of intellectual training.[1]

Conservative character of the university of Athens.

The instruction, however, imparted in these venerable seats was of a highly conventional character. None but a weak enthusiast here and there maintained with the fervour of genuine belief the tenets of any one of the philosophic sects, each of which had reigned in turn, or had contended with rival claims in the schools of Athens. On every side it was tacitly acknowledged that the limits of each specific dogma had been reached, and that either all must be abandoned together as shadowy and baseless, or each be allowed to hold its authority unquestioned within its own province. To admit the first alternative would have

[1] Aulus Gellius, writing at Athens about this time, gives a glimpse occasionally of the habits of the young men who met for study at Athens. His account is perhaps rather satirical. See the description of the supper given by the philosopher Taurus (*Noct. Att.* xi. 13.); and of the way in which the students kept the Saturnalia: "Quærebantur autem res hujusmodi: aut sententia poetæ veteris lepide obscura, non anxie; aut historiæ antiquioris requisitio; aut decreti cujuspiam ex philosophia perperam invulgati; aut captionis sophisticæ solutio; aut inopinati rariorisve verbi indagatio." xviii. 2.

been treason to the sovereignty of the human understanding, an insult to the memory of the mighty dead; but the second was well-adapted to recommend itself to an age still devoted to study, still curious about psychological laws, but which despaired of arriving at conclusive results in any direction. The broad principle that all ancient doctrines were true enough to be taught, was the charter of the great Grecian university. Accordingly, all such doctrines were admitted to the rights of domicile in it; all were established, and endowed with public salaries or by private liberality; all were allowed to be equally important for the education of the ripe and perfect scholar; and the teachers of all lived together in a state of conventional antagonism not incompatible with entire social harmony, and almost jovial good fellowship. Academics and Peripatetics, Stoics and Epicureans, Pyrrhonists and Cynics disputed together or thundered one against another simultaneously through the morning, and bathed, dined, and joked in company with easy indifference all the evening. Of new opinions, of real inquiries, of exclusive enthusiasm they were all perhaps equally jealous; but Athens was eminently a Conservative University, and the men who yearned for actual truth, and still dreamed, if it was but a dream, that after six hundred years of free speculation, the truth had been ever missed, but might yet be discovered, did not generally repair to the Academus or Lyceum in search of it.

The professorial system established at Athens.

If, however, the matter of this scholastic teaching was so little regarded, if it was understood that there was nothing new to be said for Academism or Peripateticism, that conviction and persuasion on the most venerable subjects of ancient debate were altogether out of date, the manner of teaching and expounding seemed to be thought worthy of more serious attention than ever. The language, the style, even the gesture and de-

meanour of the lecturer, attracted hearers who would have paid little heed to vehement assertions of the truth and soundness of his principles. To imbue the disciple with the idiom of the best Attic literature was now considered essential to a liberal education; and the writings of this age which emanated from the schools of Greece, are coloured by a direct and not unsuccessful imitation of Xenophon and his contemporaries. In expounding the arts of composition there may have been more originality. Had the masters of rhetoric of a more genial era taken equal pains with their successors in the second century to mould the forms of speech and writing, we should scarcely have lost all traces of their labours, while we retain the technical precepts of Hermogenes, illustrated by the laboured exercitations of Dion, Maximus and Aristides. The name of Sophist had long recovered from whatever obloquy had been cast on it by Socrates, and was extended to embrace the doctors and professors in all branches of literary acquirement. The nobility of Rome thronged to listen to their eloquence; crowds not of scholars and neophytes only, but of mature and accomplished men of the world attended upon their lectures, admired and discussed their respective merits, attached themselves to their classes, and caught up their watchwords, though no germ of truth perhaps had been discovered or suggested by them through the long period of their sovereignty. For half a century these lecturers had been salaried by the imperial treasury, and though the academic system had not yet attained its full development, we may speak even now of the established hierarchy of the sophists at Athens, the chief of whom occupied what was called by way of eminence, *the throne* of the university. Of the three principal chairs, those of Sophistics or Rhetoric, of Politics and of Philosophy, that of Sophistics took the first rank, and was endowed with

a stipend of 10,000 drachmæ, equivalent perhaps to 500*l.*[1]; but the stipend was probably the least part of the emoluments of a place which commanded the whole market of private tuition. One Chrestus declined a recommendation for it to the emperor, in whose patronage it lay, saying in his affected way, *The myriad makes not the man;* but in fact he was the well-feed tutor of a hundred private pupils, a position which no imperial liberality, then or since, could easily improve. The *throne,* however, possessed the advantage of being a place for life. Philagrus, who once ascended it, may have won the eminence by the vigour and vehemence of his character: he had been known to box the ears of an inattentive listener. But the mild Aspasius, who lounged indolently on his cushions to old age, and cared not, while he drew his stipend, whether his audience listened or not, was reproached by public opinion for not resigning a distinction of which he proved himself unworthy.[2]

The sophists at Athens, and character of their teaching.

The fashion of playing at oratory by sham contests on factitious subjects enjoyed a marvellous vitality in the ancient world. At Rome the genuine contests of the forum were replaced by the exercises not wholly unreal of the imperial bar; in many modern states the absence of political discussion has been partly com-

[1] Philostratus, *Vit. Sophist.* ii. 2. 20. Comp. Lucian, *Eunuch.* 3. Philostratus elsewhere seems to state one talent, 25*l.*, as the salary of the πολιτικὸς θρόνος at Athens, which I do not understand. *Vit. Soph.* ii. 20. Tatian (*Apol.* p. 70.) mentions the sum of 600 aurei, or guineas.

[2] Philostr. *Vit. Sophist* ii. 8. 33. Marquardt in Becker's *Alterthümer*, iii. 2. p. 87., has collected in a note the principal passages which relate to the endowment of learned men by Vespasian and his successors. Of Hadrian Spartian says expressly, c. 16.: "Omnes professores et honoravit et divites fecit . . . doctores qui professioni suæ inhabiles videbantur, ditatos honoratosque a professione dimisit." Aspasius was inexcusable! The liberality of Hadrian seems to have been further extended by Antoninus Pius and Alexander Severus.

pensated by the sphere of influence allotted to the pulpit; but it is one of the problems of social history to account for the interest so long felt or feigned in the schools of ancient Greece for the mere shadows of thought and speculation by which they were occupied. The facile eloquence of the sophists seems to have been exercised equally in the illustration of philosophical tenets, and in the discussion of themes for declamation. The clever and learned personages enumerated in long succession by Philostratus in his Lives of the most distinguished of the class, who were the admiration of Athens and all Hellas for more than a century, are celebrated by him rather for their rhetorical powers than for their skill in the exposition of dogmas, though their philosophical science seems to be taken for granted. His panegyric, enlivened as it often is by anecdotes of wit and character, fails for the most part to convey to us distinct personal conceptions; nevertheless the general character of the class is portrayed with much vividness. Born in various cities of Greece and Asia, and generally gravitating to Athens as their natural home, it is curious to observe how many of them were related to the Roman aristocracy, and could boast a connexion with senators and consulars. Such was the case with Polemon to whom Trajan granted the privilege of exemption from taxes, an exemption extended by Hadrian to his posterity; whom his own countrymen at Smyrna so praised and flattered that he could venture to say to the Athenians, *You have some credit, gentlemen, for being intelligent hearers; allow me test your capacity;* who was so eloquent that the eloquent Herodes dared not speak after him; but who dying at the age of fifty-six, which in other professions might be considered old, was reputed a mere youth in sophistry, for the sophist continues learning to the last, and storing

Polemon.

up the fruits of exercise and experience.[1] Such was the great Herodes himself, descended on the one side from Roman consulars, on the other from the mythic Æacidæ, the inheritor of immense riches, which he used so well, that Plutus, it was said, though blind with others, opened wide his eyes when he showered blessings on this generous favourite; who found a treasure, which when he declared to Nerva it was more than he could *use*, the emperor in his boundless confidence bade him then *abuse*; who received the name of Atticus not only for his love to Athens, like the Roman Pomponius, but for the endowments he had heaped upon it, and the buildings he had erected; but who was so devoted to rhetorical study, so anxious for success in art, that being deputed to address the emperor for his favourite city, and unfortunately breaking down from nervousness, he rushed to the river bank—so ran the story—to drown himself.[2]

Herodes Atticus.

The philosopher and historian Plutarch.

The vanity and frivolity of these masters of word-fence have often been depicted, and the most salient features of their life and conversation may easily be made to appear more ridiculous than they really were. They have had the misfortune, however, of being most particularly described to us by a generation even more frivolous than their own, and we must not accept without reserve the character of the men and their system as portrayed by the pencil of Philostratus. The remains of Plutarch's voluminous writings show that he rose far above the level of the Polemon or

[1] Philostr. *Vit. Sophist.* i. 25. On the occasion of the dedication of the Olympieum, Polemon ascended the steps of the portico and made an enthusiastic harangue to the people: *ὁ δὲ ὥσπερ εἰώθει, στήσας τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐπὶ τὰς ἤδη παρισταμένας ἐννοίας, ἐπαφῆκεν ἑαυτὸν τῷ λόγῳ, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς κρηπῖδος τοῦ νεῶ διελέχθη πολλὰ καὶ θαυμάσια, προοίμιον ποιούμενος τοῦ λόγου, τὸ μὴ ἀθέει τὴν περὶ αὐτοῦ ὁρμὴν γενέσθαι οἱ.* *Vit. Sophist.* i. 3.

[2] Philostr. *Vit. Sophist.* ii. 1.

Herodes of our biographer. He was at least an earnest believer in his own creed, and conscientious in the practice of the virtues he commended. In the reign of Domitian, and almost under the shadow of Domitian's palace, the sage of Chæronea lectured to a Roman audience on the highest ends of life, and the true measure of happiness and goodness. His teaching had for the most part a direct moral object, with little tendency to speculative refinements. He cared not for the name of any sect or leader, but pleaded the cause of moral beauty in the interest of truth only. What his precepts wanted in authority was abundantly supplied by the examples with which his wide historical knowledge could illustrate them. Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* are eminently philosophy teaching by example. And in estimating the moral aspect of the times and the influence of the teachers, we must not fail to remark the soundness of this writer's moral judgments, as displayed throughout his compositions. There is no work perhaps of antiquity that Christian parents can put so securely into the hands of their children; the Christian statesman may draw lessons from it in wisdom, and the Christian moralist in virtue. The work is, in another point of view, a curious monument of its epoch. The author's object was to draw a fair and friendly comparison between the Greeks and the Romans, his own countrymen and the foreigner, between the conquered and the conquerors, the spoiled and the spoilers, the slaves and the masters; between men whom other censors would have ever delighted to contrast as the spiritual Hellene and the brutal Italian, or again as the cringing Græculus and the lofty Romulides. Yet, throughout this long series of lives, this glittering array of virtues and vices, personal and national, there is no word, I think, of subservience or flattery, of scorn or vanity, of humiliation or triumph, to mark the position of the writer in the face of his Roman rulers.

Whether we consider the book as addressed to the Greeks or to the Romans, the absence of any such indications of feeling is undoubtedly remarkable. To me it seems most honourable both to the one people and to the other; moreover, it is invaluable for the insight it gives us into the prevalent sentiment of the unity of all races and classes under a common dispensation.

Apollonius of Tyana.

Of the celebrated sophist, Apollonius of Tyana, the most illustrious preacher of this dispensation, little can safely be advanced, inasmuch as all our knowledge of him comes through the distorting medium of the romance, miscalled his life, by Philostratus. The remarks which would naturally be challenged by that singular performance belong to the historian of the third century rather than of the second. All that can here be properly said of its hero is, that he deserves notice as the first perhaps of those itinerant homilists who began, from the Flavian period, to go about proclaiming moral truths, collecting groups of hearers, and sowing the seeds of spiritual wisdom and knowledge on every soil that could receive it. It was by the first Christian teachers that the example of this predication was set; and the effect produced on thoughtful spirits by the conspicuous career of St. Paul and his associates is evinced, to my apprehension, by the self-imposed mission of Apollonius in the second, and of Dion in the third generation after them.

Dion Prusæus, surnamed Chrysostomus.

Of the life, the conduct, and the specific teaching of Dion Chrysostomus, so called by his contemporaries for his eminent eloquence, we possess details on which we can rely, whence we may learn what service a high-minded sophist might perform in the interests of morality.[1] In his

[1] Philostr. *Vit. Sophist.* i. 7.: Δίωνα δὲ τὸν Πρυσαῖον οὐκ οἶδ' ὅτι χρὴ προσειπεῖν διὰ τὴν ἐς πάντα ἀρετήν· Ἀμαλθείας γὰρ κέρας ἦν, τὸ τοῦ λόγου.

younger days, while yet a mere rhetorician, this man had come to Rome from his birthplace Prusa, and had attached himself to a distinguished personage, possibly to Flavius Clemens, in whose fall he became himself involved. Domitian threatened him with death, and he fled, taking with him, by the advice of the Delphic oracle, only two books, one of Plato and one of Demosthenes.[1] He retired to a Grecian colony on the frontier of the empire; but even amid the marshes of the Getæ he deemed it prudent to forego his real name, and disguise himself in rags, and sometimes apparently to plunge into deeper concealment on the banks of the Borysthenes. At the moment, however, of Domitian's death, Dion was in the neighbourhood of a Roman encampment on the Danube, and here, when the soldiers resented their emperor's assassination and murmured at the reported accession of Nerva, he harangued them with irresistible eloquence, and secured their adhesion to the elect of the senate.[2] Nerva received him with open arms. Under this prince and his successor he recovered more than his former estimation, and became a prime favourite with Trajan, who often invited him to his table, and carried him in his chariot, and was wont, according to the story, to reply to his most charming discourses, *I admire you exceedingly, but I don't pretend to understand a word you say.* It would seem that in the haunts of civilized and educated men, the commonplaces of philosophy, with which the sophist was abundantly furnished, passed current for wisdom and truth; but it was among the ruder sons of nature on the borders of the Scythian wilderness that, on being earnestly questioned, the emptiness of such rhetorical

[1] Dion Chrys. *Orat.* xiii. xlvi. The terms in which he speaks of the patron with whom he was involved are remarkable, and seem to indicate that it was a case of suffering for opinion: *διὰ ταῦτα ἀποθανόντος δι' ἃ πολλοῖς καὶ σχεδὸν πᾶσιν ἐδόκει μακάριος.*

[2] Philostr. *l.c.* who quotes from Homer: *αὐτὰρ ὁ γυμνώθη ῥακέων πολύμητις 'Οδυσσεύς.*

flourishes flashed upon him, and he set himself to examine his own conscience and spiritual belief. The result was the abandonment of the word-war of the dogmatists, and the embrace of the simple morality of Socrates, as the only man among the ancients whose homely sense could grapple with the problems of human nature, or satisfy the inquiries of an awakened intelligence.[1] The effect of this discovery upon the pagan philosopher may be likened to that of religious conversion on the Christian disciple. Henceforth Dion devoted himself to the practice of virtue, and preached the duties which he practised. He expounded not the metaphysics of Zeno or Epicurus, but their moral maxims; diffused the knowledge of divine law and Providence, taught moderation to the haughty, patience to the impetuous, resignation to the afflicted. To Trajan on the throne he set forth the beauty of justice and the true dignity of power: to the turbulent mobs of the Italian cities he showed how the order of nature, the appointed course of the sun and stars, might enforce the duty of obedience: the fantastic and drunken crowds of Alexandria he rebuked for their levity and intemperance; he startled the vanity of the Athenians by exposing the worthlessness of their rhetoric and sophistics. He illustrated with sense and humanity the well-known paradox of the Stoics, that the good man alone is free, and used it as a text for preaching forbearance towards the slave.[2] Dion and others like him have been called the popular preachers of natural religion, and the improved tone of society at this period, of which we have discovered many traces, may in part be justly ascribed to the religious enthusiasm with which they discharged their self-appointed office. The name of Chrysostom may have already reminded

[1] Dion Chrys. *Orat.* xiii.

[2] Dion Chrys. *Orat.* xiv. p. 233.; xv. p. 238. foll. See Wallon, *l'Esclavage dans l'Antiquité*, iii. 34.

us of the most illustrious of the ancient Christian orators, and his speeches, of which a large number are preserved, may be compared, with little disadvantage, with the sermons of the bishop of Constantinople, for their warm appeals both to the heart and the conscience of their hearers.[1]

The Christian teachers and apologists

But the foundation of morality, as laid by the sophist, could rest only on the judgments of the conscience, and its dim and fluctuating ideas of goodness and holiness. At Athens, as elsewhere throughout the empire, there were other teachers at work who pleaded the direct constraint of authoritative dogmas. They appealed at once to men's hopes and fears, by the doctrine of a resurrection and a future retribution. This was the creed preached of old on Mars' hill by Saul of Tarsus, as the divine complement to the ethics of Zeno and Epicurus. This was the keystone required to bind together the broad arch of principles which spanned the duties of mankind. In Athens, the home of argument and logic, the faith of Christ could not be propounded as a bare ceremonial law; it must be set forth as a metaphysical creed; and as such it attracted some at least among the philosophers themselves, and carried off men of learning and acumen from the shadowy illusions of the Lyceum and the Academus. The Christian apologists of the second century, such as Justin and others, converts themselves from the Gentile philosophy, excited the interest and admiration of their hearers by plunging them into the mysteries of their new faith, and especially the deepest of all mysteries, the doctrine of the Trinity. If the wisdom of the world was repelled by the story of Christ's humiliation and sufferings, it was attracted, on the other hand, by

[1] Dion Chrysostom is well described, and not perhaps too highly estimated, by M. Martha, in the *Revue Contemporaine*, Paris, 1857. *Les Moralistes de l'Empire Romain*, 1864.

the promise revealed at his resurrection, and this cardinal dogma became the stronghold of the new faith in its contests with the Gentile moralists. The presence of the emperor in Athens, and the curiosity with which he surveyed all the conflicts of human opinion, encouraged the Christian teachers to address him as a truth-seeker himself, and to defend their own bold and novel creed against the reasonings, the sneers, and the violence of their antagonists. Though devoted from early habit to the ancient formulas of Grecian wisdom, and generally content to roam from the halls of one familiar teacher to those of another, Hadrian was nevertheless inquisitive and restless by nature, and the vague aspirations suggested to him at his initiation into the mysteries at Eleusis,—for he had pried into the deepest mysteries of the heathen world,—could not fail to arouse him to the pretensions of a creed which was founded directly on the doctrine of Immortality.[1] It must be remembered, moreover, that Christianity, which even at Rome assumed to uninstructed eyes the appearance of a Greek speculation, at Athens, the very centre of Greece, seemed to emanate directly from the schools. Accordingly Hadrian listened graciously to the apologies of Quadratus and Aristides, who appeared perhaps before him in the actual garb of philosophers[2]; and the

Hadrian's toleration of the Christian faith.

[1] Spartian, *Hadr.* 13.; Euseb. *Chron.* a. 122. This emperor's curiosity, particularly in religious matters, is affirmed by a consensus of authority. Tertullian, *Apol.* 5.: "Curiositatum omnium explorator." Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* v. 5.: πάντα τὰ περίεργα πολυπραγμονῶν. Julian, *in Cæsar.*: πολυπραγμονῶν τὰ ἀπόῤῥητα. Like many of the Romans he demeaned himself very differently in Rome and in the provinces; hence it could be said of him at Rome, notwithstanding the character he then bore abroad: "Sacra Romana diligentissime curavit, peregrina contempsit."

[2] Justin the Martyr, whose apologies were addressed to Hadrian's successors, expressly states of himself that he continued after his conversion to wear the philosopher's habit. (*Dial. cum Tryph.* init.) Aristides was also a convert from the heathen philosophy, but the

mildness he exercised towards the believers may not unreasonably be ascribed to the influence of their reputed learning and wisdom.[1]

Hadrian dissatisfied with the conservative spirit of Athens.

But Athens was on the whole the great conservative University of the Roman world, and the noble youths who flocked to it for the teaching of the sophists, imbibed a conviction that the whole circle of learning had been there described, and no further discoveries in ethics or metaphysics remained to reward industry or genius. At Athens the spirit of inquiry was restrained by the influence of great names and long revered associations. Thence the student returned to Rome with his ears closed against all novel opinions, full of enthusiasm for the past, satisfied with the assurance that the existing generation, if there was no new truth for it to discover, was blest in the enjoyment of the accumulated discoveries of ages. Though bred himself in this school of self-complacency, and fitted by his powers of acquisition to master all the knowledge which Athens had stamped with her sanction, Hadrian was not so easily con-

same, however probable, cannot be said with confidence of Quadratus, who is only known to us as the bishop of Athens. See Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* iv. 23.; S. Hieron. *de Vir. Illustr.* 19, 20. The only existing fragment of Quadratus asserts in the boldest manner reputed miracles of healing and resurrection: *οἱ θεραπευθέντες, οἱ ἀναστάντες ἐκ νεκρῶν.* Compare Routh, *Reliq. Sacr.* i. 71.; Milman, *Hist. of Christianity*, ii. 153. note.

[1] From Justin Martyr, *Apol.* 1. 66., and Euseb. *H.E.* iv. 8, 9., we learn that Hadrian, in answer to Minucius Fundanus, prefect of Asia, directed him to keep strictly to the law in his treatment of the Christians, and not to yield to popular clamour against them. It would seem that since Trajan's rescript the law had shaped itself into a more definite form; still the mode and extent of executing it appears to have been left generally to the discretion of the local authorities. It is strange, however, and shows how little we really know of the Roman procedure, to find the Christian apologist Melito addressing Hadrian's successors with the assertion that the persecution of the disciples in Asia in his time is something quite new: *τὸ γὰρ οὐδεπώποτε γενόμενον νῦν διώκεται τὸ τῶν θεοσεβῶν γένος καινοῖς ἐλαυνόμενον δόγμασι κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν.* Euseb. *Eccl. Hist.* iv. 26.

tented. From temper, from experience, and from the freshness of intellect which he nourished by constant movement, he still retained an interest in every pretension to novelty, and traced with undiminished zest all the eccentricities of the human mind.[1] He crossed over from Athens to Alexandria, and there a new scene opened upon him. The Egyptian capital bore, like that of Greece, the character of a University. Thither also the youth of every province flocked to attend the lectures of another tribe of sophists; and there too professors of every science were maintained at the public expense, or by endowments which had existed from the era of the Ptolemies. The academic life of Alexandria, such as it had already continued for four centuries, was cast nearly in the type with which our modern ideas are most familiar. The Museum was an assemblage of lecture rooms, private chambers, common halls, and libraries, in which the professors dined, studied and disputed together, the envy and admiration of a hundred generations of pupils.[2] The Brucheum was a similar institution affiliated to the Museum. The emperor Claudius had endowed a separate college in which his own histories were appointed to form a

He crosses over to Alexandria. A.D. 130, 131.

Liberal and inquisitive character of the Alexandrian University.

[1] It was from his own love of eccentricity that he pretended to prefer Cato to Cicero, Ennius to Virgil, Antimachus to Homer. Spartian, *Hadr.* 16. In compliment to this fancy an Alexandrian poet composed 24 books of a work to which he gave the name of Anti-Homerus. Orion ventured on the *tour de force* of haranguing him in a Latin panegyric, a task to which few Greeks would have been equal. Hadrian repaid these flatteries by writing a long poem in Greek, in praise of Alexandria and its founder. "Cum his professoribus et philosophis libris vel carminibus invicem editis sæpe certavit." Spartian, c. 15. Hadrian's visit to Alexandria may be dated A.D. 130, 131. Gregorovius, p. 39.

[2] Strabo, xvii. 1.; Philostr. *Vit. Sophist.* i. 22.; Ammian. Marcell. xxii. 16.: "Diuturnum præstantium hominum domicilium." For the public libraries of Athens and Alexandria see A. Gellius, vi. 17. There is a full account of Alexandria, the Serapeum, the Brucheum, the libraries, &c., in Ammianus, *l. c.*

substantial part of the course of instruction. The Temple of Serapis accommodated the remains of the Ptolemæan library which had escaped from Cæsar's fire. There it continued to receive large additions, which made it once more, in the decline of the empire, the great storehouse of ancient learning. But Alexandria was the university of progress. Though the city of the great Macedonian had now existed for near five hundred years, its ripe age was not encircled with the antique associations which rendered Athens peculiarly venerable. Alexandria had no mythology and no legendary poetry. She had not grown through the obscurity of immemorial ages; she was a creation of historic times. From the first her career had been marked out for her by the fiat of her founder; she had been devoted originally to the material pursuits of commerce; and now in her maturity, she was an emporium for the interchange of ideas and speculations along with the products of various climes and industries. Alexandria was accustomed to welcome novelty in thought as well as in arts and manufactures. With her discovery was at a premium; and even ethics and metaphysics had their exchangeable value among the curious of all nations, who met at the junction of three continents; for her ships were the feelers with which she touched on Greece and Italy, while her site was debateable land between Africa and Asia.[1] Through Alexandria ran the current of Eastern thought which now set most strongly westward. The Greek philosophy domiciled in the capital of the Ptolemies was stirred to its depths by converging streams from Syria, Persia and India. Judaism and Christianity were estab-

[1] The isthmus of Suez or the stream of the Nile has generally been specified as the boundary of the two continents: but in Cæsar's time the line of demarkation was supposed popularly to run through the centre of the city of Alexandria. *De Bell. Alex.* 14.: "Prædicant partem esse Alexandriæ dimidiam Africæ."

lished side by side with the gross idolatry of the Copts, and the elemental worship of the Sabæans. The fantastic theosophy of the Gnostics, of which the local and the spiritual filiation are equally unknown to us, exercised an unacknowledged influence wherever the human mind was deeply moved by the problems of man's relation to the Deity. Into this new world of conflicting opinions Hadrian threw himself with vehemence and ardour. He made himself at home in the discussions of the Alexandrian schools, and was more entertained than enlightened by the wayward imaginations which they paraded before him. The impression made upon him is discovered from a letter in which he describes to Servianus the intellectual aspect of the place.[1] *I am now become fully acquainted*, he says, *with that Egypt which you extol so highly. I have found the people vain, fickle and shifting with every breath of opinion. Those who worship Serapis are in fact Christians; and they who call themselves Christian bishops are actually worshippers of Serapis. There is no chief of a Jewish synagogue, no Samaritan, no Christian bishop, who is not an astrologer, a fortune-teller and a conjuror. The patriarch himself, when he comes to Egypt, is compelled by one party to worship Serapis, by the other Christ.* Then, after a digression on the busy and restless character of the people, he continues: *They have but one God* (alluding to their idolatry of lucre)--*him Christians,*

[1] The genuineness of the letter may be questioned on the ground of Verus being mentioned as Hadrian's son. It would appear from Spartian that this prince was not adopted till the year 135. On the other hand, it is not absolutely necessary to conclude that the letter was written from Alexandria in the time at Hadrian's visit in 131. But the importance attached to the Christians and the interest shown in them, not to mention the premature degeneracy imputed to them, seem to me to throw much doubt upon it. The letter is not recorded by Hadrian's biographer Spartianus, but occurs incidentally in the life of a later emperor by Vopiscus. *Vit. Saturnin.* c. 8.

Jews and Gentiles worship all alike.[1] The ardour of the Alexandrians in the pursuit of wealth is thus pungently satirized, and we can understand how the bustle of a great commercial emporium would surprise an observer accustomed to the dignified somnolence of an old-fashioned city like Athens; but the sneer thus loosely hazarded against the opinions current among them may require some closer consideration.

Interest taken by Hadrian in the dogmatic teaching of the Jews and Christians.

It must strike us with surprise that the philosophic emperor, a smatterer in all knowledge, and a spy upon all opinions, should direct his remarks, not to the state of Gentile philosophy, but to that of Jewish and Christian belief. Possibly, if we knew the occasion of this letter, which, from certain allusions it contains, must belong to a date some years later than Hadrian's actual visit, the explanation of this circumstance might be more apparent; but taking the document as it lies before us, we must conclude that the phenomena of Judaism and Christianity constituted, even at this period, the most salient features of the intellectual movement at Alexandria. The sophists of the Museum, whether standing on the old ways, and proclaiming the tenets of the old Greek philosophy, or whether busied in contriving the eclectic system

[1] Such is the explanation usually given of this allusion to the *One God*; according to the reading: "Unus illis deus est. Hunc Christiani," &c. See Milman, *Hist. of Christianity*, ii. 156. But the passage is probably corrupt. One MS. gives: "Unus illis deus nullus est. Hunc," &c., which Mr. Sharpe, *Hist. of Egypt*, ii. 168., follows, rendering it: "Their one God is nothing. Christians, Jews, and all nations worship him;" referring to the prevalent monotheism among the Oriental sects at Alexandria. Serapis combined more than one divinity in his own person: Ἥλιος, Ὧρος, Ὄσιρις, Ἄναξ, Διόνυσος, Ἀπόλλων. Euseb. *Præp. Evang.* iii. 15, 16.: "Hence arose the opinion which seems to have been given to Hadrian, that the Egyptians had only one God, and his mistake in thinking that the worshippers of Serapis were Christians." Sharpe, *Hist. of Egypt*, ii. 168.

which has assumed a place in mental history under the name of the New Platonism, attracted less remark from a curious but intelligent observer, than the professors of a religious doctrine, Jewish or Christian. Hadrian, indeed, cosmopolite though he was in tastes and habits, could not transcend the limits prescribed by his birth and training. He discovered in the views of the Alexandrians a tendency to Oriental, and even to Jewish ideas, which revolted rather than attracted him. The Gnostic theories of the Divine Nature with which they were impregnated would be to him strange and preposterous, while the seriousness they affected, and the positive belief they required, would be felt as a burden by one who was accustomed to regard all philosophy as a mere playing with truth. Hadrian, however, mingled freely with the sages and professors of the Egyptian capital; he conversed, debated, and banqueted with them; accepted from them the same flattery, and dispensed to them in return the same liberality which had marked his intercourse with the rival university. Here, too, he increased the salaries of the public teachers, and encouraged the youth of the empire to make literature their business. We may believe that he extended his protection to the preachers of Christianity also, and helped to raise them to the high place they long held among the learned at Alexandria. The praises of the early Church were not ill-bestowed on the prince to whom we may thus be indebted for the liberal piety of Clement and Origen. Here, as at Athens, he left abundant tokens of his munificence, in the erection of useful and noble buildings, and in the reconstruction of a quarter of the city. But the mob of Alexandria had been always notorious for turbulence and indocility. The fanaticism of the Coptic race was here stimulated by political jealousy. In the rural districts a dispute about the genuineness of an Apis had recently goaded it to bloody conflict,

and the religious dissensions of Ombi and Tentyra had been polluted by actual cannibalism.[1] In the city, however, the rivalry of the Copts and Jews, together with their mutual hatred of the dominant Greek race, had engendered chronic disaffection and resistance to all legal authority. In vain had the Roman government forbidden its citizens to reside in Egypt, and excite by their arrogance or cupidity the susceptibilities of the native population. In vain was the independence of the proudest of cities more tenderly handled than that of any other in the empire. The rabble of the streets, who controlled the local administration, despised every title or dignity: they insulted the emperor himself as recklessly as they would have hooted a Greek sophist or a Jewish rabbi. When Hadrian's favourite Antinous was drowned in the Nile, a misfortune with which all the world that pretended to self-respect affected a decent sympathy, the Alexandrians alone made a mock of their ruler's weakness, and the letter above cited seems to have been written under the actual smart of their unfeeling ribaldry.[2] *I have given these people*, Hadrian said,

Death of Hadrian's favourite, Antinous, A. D. 131.

[1] Spartianus, *Hadr.* 12., refers to a riot at Alexandria on the subject of the Apis: "Alexandrina seditione turbatus, quæ nata est ob Apin, qui cum repertus esset post multos annos turbas inter populos creavit, apud quem deberet locari omnibus studiose certantibus." The best account of the Apis is in Ammian. Marcell. xxii. 14. Of the respect with which Hadrian would affect to approach the subject we may surmise from what has been already said of him. Augustus had treated the bull-god with contempt; earlier emperors had wantonly slain him. But Germanicus consulted his oracle, and Titus had paid him honour. The bloody quarrel of Ombi and Tentyra is the theme of Juvenal's *Sat.* xv., and is referred with most probability to the year 119, the third of Hadrian, from the words, "quæ nuper consule Junio," xv. 27.

[2] Dion, lxix. 11.; Spartian, *Hadr.* 14. Hadrian seems to have said that Antinous fell by accident into the water. Other accounts, however, asserted that he drowned himself voluntarily in obedience to an oracle which demanded, for the life of the emperor, the sacrifice of the object dearest to him. However this may be, Hadrian lamented

everything they asked for. I have confirmed all their ancient privileges, and added new, which they could not help acknowledging in my presence. But no sooner had I turned my back than they lavished every kind of insult on my son Verus, and my friend Antinous. I wish them no worse, he added in his bantering tone, *than that they should feed on their own chickens; and how foully they hatch them I am ashamed to say.*[1]

Ingratitude of the Alexandrians.

The character of the Alexandrians is painted in one of the most interesting of Dion's orations, which is also curious as a specimen of the lay-preaching of a converted rhetorician, and of the extent to which freedom of speech was allowed in lashing the follies of the sovereign people.[2] The sophist's charges against them relate to their vanity and frivolity, their extravagant devotion to public amusements, singing, playing, and racing, and also to the bloody conflicts in which their amusements too often resulted. But Dion visited Alexandria before the time of Hadrian, and could not resent as it de-

his death with extravagant weakness, proclaimed his divinity to the jeering Egyptians, and consecrated a temple in his honour. He gave the name of Besantinoopolis to the city in which he was worshipped in conjunction with an obscure divinity named Besa. Deification in Egypt assumed the form of identification with a recognised divinity. Origen, edit. *Celsum*, iii.; Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 8.; Sharpe, *Hist. Egypt*, ii. 161. The late discoveries in hieroglyphics have shown that the obelisk on the Monte Pincio at Rome was dedicated to the memory of Antinous in the joint names of Hadrian and Sabina. Smyth, *Roman Medals*, p. 110.

[1] Vopiscus, *l. c.*: "Quos quemadmodum fœcundant pudet dicere." Aristotle had not shrunk from mentioning how the Egyptians hatched their fowls' eggs in dung. Casaubon, in loc. Besides the apparent anachronism of the allusion to Verus, it may be said that neither the matter nor the style of this letter is such as we should expect from an imperial correspondent. Vopiscus professes to take it from the volumes of Phlegon, a freedman of Hadrian.

[2] Dion Chrys. *Orat.* xxxii. Ammian. Marcell. xxii. 6. speaks more particularly of their litigious and quarrelsome temper: "Ægyptii genus hominum controversum, et assuetudine perplexius litigandi semper lætissimum," &c.

served the ingratitude the people manifested towards a gracious prince, from whom, though parts of his conduct might provoke a smile, they had experienced only unmerited kindness. Hadrian did not condescend to take vengeance on his persecutors: two generations later an emperor of a different stamp washed out indignities not more crying in a sanguinary massacre.[1] The mild philosopher who now commanded the thirty legions shook off the dust of the turbid city from his feet and made a pilgrimage, as a peaceful antiquarian, to the wonders of old Thebes. The name of Hadrian does not now appear among the rude inscriptions which can be still decyphered on the Egyptian monuments; but some Greek lines scratched on the legs of the broken statue of Memnon, show that Sabina, at least, visited that mysterious fragment, and heard the music which issued from it at sunrise.[2] Hadrian ascended likewise the Casian Mount, crowned with a celebrated temple of Jupiter, and restored the temple of Pompeius at its foot, which had been recently overthrown by the Jews. His taste and piety were further attested by a short and pithy epigram on the uncertainty of fortune, which he caused to be inscribed upon it.[3]

[1] Herodian, iv. 16, 17.

[2] The inscription is given by Eckhel, vi. 490., and many others:

Ἔκλυον αὐδήσαντος ἐγὼ Πόπλιος Βαλβῖνος
Φωνὰς τὰς θείας Μέμνονος ἢ Φάμενοφ: κ. τ. λ.

The date, which is specified in it, may be fixed to 131 or even 130, quite at the commencement of Hadrian's residence in Egypt, if not a little before his arrival. The statue was at this time lying in fragments, and the sounds were supposed to issue from the broken pieces. Mr. Sharpe considers the marvel a direct imposture. For the fondness of the Romans for visiting antiquities, which has been referred to before, see Epictetus, *Dissert.* i. 6.: *εἰς Ὀλυμπίαν μὲν ἀποδημεῖτε, ἵν εἰδῆτε τὸ ἔργον τοῦ Φειδίου, καὶ ἀτύχημα ἕκαστος ὑμῶν οἴεται τὸ ἀνιστόρητος τούτων ἀποθανεῖν.*

[3] Dion, lxix. 11.: *τῷ ναος βρίθοντι πόσηπάνις ἔπλετο τύμβου.* Comp. Spartian, *Hadr.* 14.; Appian, *Bell. Civ.* ii. 96. The historian, or his epitomist, brings Hadrian from Greece, through Judea to

Hadrian visits Antioch, and is disgusted with its frivolity and voluptuousness.

If Hadrian was dissatisfied with the people of Alexandria, he was disgusted and incensed with the inhabitants of Antioch. This city, the third in population and importance of the empire, the capital of the once powerful kings of Syria, and honoured for now nearly two centuries by the residence of the Roman proconsul, who approached nearest in rank and power to the emperor himself, was abandoned, beyond any of the great centres of wealth and luxury, to the indolent enjoyment of voluptuous ease. The Antiochians made no pretensions to learning or philosophy, but they were addicted to vile and vicious superstitions, in which the simple ideas of a remote antiquity were corrupted into gross licentiousness, and deformed by the impurest orgies. Placed in the centre of a rich and populous region, and on the highway which united the East and West with the South, they offered a mart for the productions of many realms, and their city was the resort of traders as well as idlers from the three continents. The unrivalled beauty of its situation, a fertile plain watered by an abundant river, visited by breezes from the sea at fifteen miles' distance, and sheltered from fiercer winds by a lofty table mountain in its rear, presented an alluring place of residence, and made Antioch the favourite retreat of the idle and self-indulgent. The attractions of its suburb, named Daphne from the laurel groves which encircled the fane of Apollo, were famous throughout the West, and often proved the Capua of the Roman legions. The remoteness of this Eastern capital from Rome, and the fatal though unavoidable policy, by which the legionaries and their chiefs, together

Mount Casius, on his way into Egypt. I suppose him, on the contrary, to have entered Judea from Egypt, where he promulgated the decrees which produced the Jewish insurrection in 132. But the exact sequence of his movements must be considered as very uncertain.

with the concourse of the prefect's civil attendants, were suffered to remain for many years together in so luxurious a banishment, emboldened the Italians to cast off the restraints of national decorum, and yield to the fascinations of the Syrian Circe, who flouted the austere habits of the West with keen edged satire or boisterous ridicule. Again and again the emperors called them to arms to chastise the Jew, to protect the Armenian, or to threaten the Parthian; but every interval of tranquillity relaxed the bonds of discipline, and the Syrian proconsul was less formidable to the prince at Rome when at the head of his soldiers in the field, than when he winked at their irregularities and debauched them at head-quarters. The frequent occurrence of disastrous earthquakes contributed perhaps to make the people reckless in their manner of life, and disposed them to enjoy the passing hour, and drown in tumultuous excitement the fears of impending danger.

Hadrian had been known to the Antiochians while still a subject. Doubtless they had made sport with their usual levity of the weak points in his character, which were sufficiently obvious. They knew the circumstances under which he had succeeded to the purple, and many a ribald joke had passed among them touching the favour to which he was surmised to have owed it. Though surrounded on his next appearance in their city with the terrors of sovereign power, they still could not control their bantering humour, and as an emperor and a philosopher he was perhaps equally offended at the frivolity of a people who had no sense of dignity themselves, nor could respect the dignity of others. Among the names of princes who illustrated this spot with their buildings, that of Hadrian, the universal builder, finds no place. On the contrary, he took from it some of its cherished

He is insulted by the Antiochians.

privileges, and subjected it to the supremacy of the provincial seaport of Tyre.[1]

Hadrian continues his progress through Asia Minor.

Such are the incidents connected with Hadrian's sojourn in the principal cities of his wide dominions. There would be no advantage in specifying all the places of less importance which he visited in the course of his unwearied peregrinations. Many of them are incidentally mentioned by the historians and biographers; others are notified by the legends of his coinage, in which he appears as the *Restorer* of above thirteen places or provinces, a title which seems to imply a personal visit, accompanied by some eminent benefaction.[2] He erected temples at Smyrna and Cyzicus, buried in the Rhæteum on the plain of Troy some colossal bones, supposed to be those of Ajax, and founded in Bithynia a town to which he gave the name of Hadrianothera, in commemoration of a successful hunting-match.[3] On the frontiers of Armenia he received the homage of the petty chiefs who infested the confines of the empire, and impressed on Pharasmanes, the king of the Alani, a due sense of Roman power and dignity, by clothing his gladiators, by way of mockery, in the gilded vestments with which that simple potentate had sought to purchase

[1] Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.* iii. 297.; Spartian, *Hadr.* 14.: "Antiochenses ita odio habuit ut Syriam a Phœnice separare voluerit, ne tot civitatum metropolis Antiochia diceretur." At a later period the emperors found it necessary to remove the head-quarters of their army from so corrupt a locality. Procopius (*Bell. Pers.* i. 17.) speaks of it as entirely denuded of soldiers: *ἡ δὴ ἀφυλακτός τε καὶ στρατιώτων ἐρημός ἐστι· οὐ γὰρ ἄλλου οὐδένος τῷ ταύτης δήμῳ ὅτι μὴ πανηγύρεών τε καὶ τρυφῆς μέλει, καὶ τῆς ἐν θεάτροις ἀεὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους φιλονεικίας.*

[2] See Eckhel, vi. 487. foll. The countries or cities thus mentioned are Achaia, Africa, Arabia, Bithynia, Gallia, Hispania, Italia, Libya, Macedonia, Mauretania, Nicomedia, Phrygia, Sicilia. Hadrian travelled with a company of architects and artificers, ordered after the fashion of a legion of soldiers: "Id specimen legionum militarium . . . . in cohortes centuriaverat." Victor, *Epit.* 28.

[3] Dion, lxix. 10.; Spartian, *Hadr.* 20.

his favour.[1] At the same time he gratified the Parthian Chosroes, who had resumed his ancestral seat on the Euphrates, by restoring to him his daughter made captive by Trajan. He promised also, it is said, to send back to him the golden throne which the conqueror had carried off from Susa; but this magnanimous restitution was never actually made.[2] These overtures of reconciliation may have been timed to divert that still powerful monarch from assisting the Jews in the great struggle which broke out in Palestine in 132, as soon as Hadrian's presence was withdrawn from the neighbourhood.

Hadrian once more revisits Athens, A. D. 133, 134.

I have not attempted to follow Hadrian's steps accurately. The scattered hints received from our authorities have been variously pieced by the critics, and do not admit, perhaps, of confident manipulation. I presume, however, that he passed through Syria in 132, and after some further wanderings in the Eastern provinces, returned for the last time to Athens, and there spent the winter of 133–134. At Athens he might witness the completion of his buildings, and enjoy once more, with the greater zest from the comparison with Alexandria and Antioch, the manners and conversation of his favourite residence. But Rome, after all, the centre of business and of duty, was the place to which the imperial pilgrimages gravitated. Wherever else ambition, cupidity, or thirst of knowledge and adventure might call him, during his years of activity, it was at Rome, or within sight of Rome, that every genuine Roman wished to retire in declining age, and compose himself for the last journey to the resting-place of his ancestors. Hadrian had already reached old age, and had governed the empire sixteen years; his health too was much debilitated, and he had no reasonable

And takes up his residence at Rome, A. D. 134.

[1] Dion, lxix. 15.; Spartian, *Hadr.* 13. 17. [2] Spartian, *Hadr.* 13.

prospect of lengthened days, when, in 134, he took up his residence in his capital, and ceased from his restless wanderings. Here, however, he continued to employ himself with unabated industry. He established a university at Rome, which he designated the Athenæum, after the type of the cherished city whence its name was derived, and he endowed its professors on a scale befitting its metropolitan character.[1] The throne of rhetoric at Rome took precedence of all its rivals, both in rank and emolument. But the liberal sciences were exotics in Italy, and produced no popular teachers and no celebrated schools. The activity of the Roman mind was running towards law and jurisprudence; but this was a practical subject which formed no part of the speculations to which the career of Academic study was prescriptively confined. While philosophy and rhetoric were stationary or retrogressive, the principles of law were rapidly advancing, and Hadrian was himself unconscious of the social transformation which was already taking shape under his auspices. At Rome we behold in him the busy and earnest administrator, surveying from the centre of his vast dominions the character and conduct of his subordinates, keeping all his instruments well in hand, assiduous in selecting the best agents, and strict in requiring an account of their agency, putting to use the local and personal knowledge acquired by so many years of travel and inspection. Amidst this unceasing round of occupation, it was his recreation to behold the glorious buildings still rising at his command in every quarter of the city. It is almost wearisome to turn again and

Establishment of the Athenæum at Rome.

Hadrian's buildings at Rome.

[1] Philostr. *Vit. Sophist.* ii. 10, 8. Victor, *Cæs.* 14.: "Ita Græcorum more . . . gymnasia, doctoresque curare occœpit, adeo quidem ut etiam ludum ingenuarum artium quod Athenæum vocant, constitueret; atque initia Cereris Liberæque, quæ Eleusinia dicitur, Atheniensium modo Roma percoleret."

again to the subject of the imperial architecture, which has formed a feature in the narrative of almost every reign in succession; but we are bound to remark that the edifices of Hadrian at Rome surpassed in magnificence all the works of his predecessors.[1] His temple of Rome and Venus, with its double cells, placed fantastically back to back, was at once the largest in size and the most splendid in its features of the religious edifices of the capital. Raised on a lofty basement on the eastern slope of the Velia, and looking down into the hollow in which the Colosseum was injudiciously placed, it might command even more remark and admiration than that masterpiece of imperial grandeur. The Mausoleum which Hadrian created for himself on the further bank of the Tiber far outshone the tomb of Augustus, which it nearly confronted; of the size and dignity which characterized this work of Egyptian massiveness, we may gain a conception from the existing remains; but it requires an effort of imagination to transform the scarred and shapeless bulk before us into the graceful pile which rose column upon column, surmounted by a gilded dome of span almost unrivalled, and terminating in the statue of the beatified builder, whose remains reposed below. The Mole of Hadrian was, next to the Colosseum, the most distinguished specimen of the style of architecture which we designate as Roman, whencesoever really derived; which by raising tier upon tier of external

Temple of Rome and Venus.

Mausoleum or Moles Hadriani.

[1] Spartian, *Hadr.* 19., gives a long enumeration of these works. It was remarked that Hadrian modestly refrained from inscribing his name upon any one of them, except the temple he dedicated to Trajan. Among other undertakings he employed an architect named Decrianus to remove the colossus of Nero, the face of which had been altered into a Sol, from its place on the slope of the Velia to another site. He does not seem to have accomplished the design of Apollodorus to erect a companion statue of Luna.

decorations, after the number of stories required within, adapted to civil and domestic purposes the monumental grandeur of the Grecian. Besides these, and other erections of his own, Hadrian is noted as the restorer of many famous buildings of an earlier date, such as the Septa, the Pantheon, the temple of Augustus, and the baths of Agrippa. But his services in these cases may have been but slight. However liable Rome was to suffer from fires, earthquakes and inundations, we can hardly suppose that these structures, most of which had been repaired by Titus or Domitian, could already require again extensive renovation.[1]

Hadrian adopts for a successor L. Ceionius Commodus Verus. A. D. 135.

Hitherto, Hadrian had been able to follow the policy which had before recommended itself to his predecessor, of shunning, by long absence from the city, collision with his jealous nobility. At the same time he had skilfully avoided the alternative which alone had presented itself to Trajan's mind. He had kept the legions in good humour without indulging them in the exhausting amusement of perpetual warfare.[2] When, however, he finally took up his residence in

[1] The Tiburtine villa of Hadrian is entirely destroyed. Its site is said to be ascertained, and its limits, eight miles in circuit, may perhaps be traced. It embraced, besides the residence and quarters for the guard, buildings modelled on the Lyceum and Academy, the colonnade called Pœcile, the Prytaneum, &c. at Athens, a Canopus which may have represented some edifice at Alexandria. In its gardens was a space laid out after the fashion of the vale of Tempe, a Tartarus, and perhaps, on the other hand, Elysian Fields. Spartian, *Hadr.* 26.; Victor, *Cæs.* 14.

[2] Spartian, *Hadr.* 21.: "Expeditiones sub eo graves nullæ fuerunt; bella etiam silentio pæne transacta." At the same time the writer adds: "A militibus, propter curam exercitus nimiam, multum amatus est, simul quod in eos liberalissimus fuit." Victor relates (*Epit.* 14.) that Hadrian used to boast that he had gained more for the empire in peace, by the skilful use of bribes to foreign potentates, than his predecessors by war; but Spartian, c. 17., gives a different colour to these pretensions: "Regibus multis plurimum detulit; a plerisque vero etiam pacem redemit; a nonnullis contemptus est."

Rome or his villas in the vicinity, the prince of the senate, the first citizen, as he proclaimed, of the republic, found himself the mark of an envious aristocracy, encouraged by his condescension to fancy themselves really his equals, and disposed, at the first sign of his health failing, to intrigue against him. The successor of Trajan and Nerva had vowed never to put a senator to death; and the only instance in which this hope had been hitherto disappointed, was excused by the precipitation of the senate itself. But such a restriction could not possibly be maintained, if the emperor's person was to be exposed to the machinations of senatorial ambition. Nor was Hadrian's good-nature proof against the irritation caused by increasing infirmities.[1] Sensible of his own weakness, and anxious to the last to keep faith with his subjects, he determined, having no child of his own, to choose a colleague, and adopt an heir and a successor, as the best security for his own peace, the most direct check on the irregular aspirations of his nobles. But the empire, as it would seem, was singularly deficient in men of eminence befitting such an elevation. We need not lay much stress upon the charge of jealousy made against him, for rejecting the presumed claims of personages so obscure as Terentius Gentianus and Plætorius Nepos.[2] Nor, in our ignorance of the circumstances, shall we dwell on the strange intimation, that he was so jealous of the pretensions of his brother-in-law Servianus, then ninety years of age, as to put him to death on a frivolous pretext, in defiance of every obligation. It

[1] Of this good-nature several instances, some of them eccentric enough, are recorded; but such anecdotes seem hardly worth repeating. See, however, Spartian, *Hadr.* 16, 17. 20. The trial of wit between the emperor and the poet Florus in the verses, "Ego nolo Cæsar esse, etc.," is well known.

[2] A. Plætorius Nepos is only known to us as a commander in Britain, from the various inscriptions in the neighbourhood of the Roman wall.

is said, indeed, that many other magnates were sacrificed at the same time, some by judicial sentences, others by assassination.[1] At this period, also, the empress Sabina died; and as her dislike of him was well-known, and it was even rumoured that she had taken precautions against conception, lest the world should be afflicted by such another monster, it became currently reported that she was taken off by poison.[2] All these charges may be allowed to stand or fall together; the last is expressly discredited by a far from friendly historian. Nor am I inclined to pay much regard to the insinuation, that his choice of a successor was finally determined by mere unworthy favouritism. L. Ceionius Commodus Verus was a young noble of high birth and family distinction; but the Romans refused to allow him any personal merit, and affirmed that his adoption and appointment were made in opposition to the universal feeling, and required to be purchased, as it were, of the people and soldiers by largesses, donatives and shows.[3] Such liberalities, it is enough to say, would follow the designation of an heir to the empire as a matter of long-established usage.

Character of Verus.

The descriptions we have received of this child of fortune seem meant to reproduce the traditional features of the most noted voluptuaries. They represent, however, a certain fantastic finery of manners, to which it would be difficult to find an exact parallel. The habits of Verus combined the effeminacy of Mæcenas with the dissolute-

[1] Spartian, *Hadr.* 23.

[2] Victor, *Epit.* 14. Spartian mentions the rumour as "fabula dati veneni," a phrase he would hardly have used if he wished to accredit it. Victor adds a report hardly less to the emperor's discredit, if true, which is very doubtful, that she killed herself in disgust at his ill-treatment, "prope servilibus injuriis."

[3] Spartian, *l. c.*: "Adoptavit Ceionium Commodum Verum invitis omnibus, cumque Ælium Verum Cæsarem appellavit." Dion, lxix. 17.: Καίσαρα ἀπέδειξε.

ness of Otho, and the extravagance of Petronius; but he possessed neither the shrewdness of the first, the courage of the second, nor the genial though reckless gaiety we attribute to the last of these voluptuaries. The few anecdotes recorded of him give a picture of the times, if not of the actual man,—of their emasculate dissipation and indolent elegance,—not unimportant to our historical review. Thus Verus, we are told, recommended himself to the emperor by the invention of a pasty which became the favourite dish at the imperial table.[1] He was wont to take his mid-day rest, with his concubines, on an ample couch enclosed in mosquito-nets, stuffed with rose-leaves, and strewn with a coverlet of woven lilies, amusing himself with the perusal of Ovid's most licentious compositions. He equipped his pages as Cupids, with wings on their shoulders, and made them run on his errands with a speed which human muscles could not maintain, till they dropped. When his spouse complained of his infidelities, he gaily bade her understand that *wife* is a term of honour, not of pleasure.[2] This despised matron, however, is said to have borne him several children, who lived to enjoy and prolong the honour and fortunes of the family. It was added, even by those who so described him, that if there was nothing to praise, there was also little to reprove in him, and that he might be regarded as at least a tolerable ruler. The historian allows, indeed, that in addition to the grace and beauty of his person, Verus was dignified in counte-

[1] Spartian, *Ælius Verus*, 5.: "Tetrapharmacum seu potius pentapharmacum, quo postea semper Hadrianus est usus, ipse dicitur reperisse." Hadrian's fondness for the pleasures of the table is mentioned among other of his tastes or accomplishments by Fronto (*de Feriis Alsiensibus*, 3.): "Orbis terrarum non regendi tantum sed etiam perambulandi diligentem, modulorum tamen et tibicinum studio devinctum fuisse scimus, et præterea prandiorum opimorum esorem optimum fuisse."

[2] Spartian, *l. c.*: "Uxor enim dignitatis nomen est, non voluptatis." Our language can hardly rival here the compactness of the Latin.

nance and impressive in his delivery, besides being a good composer of verses. We may suspect some false colouring in this delineation, and that Hadrian's choice was more judicious and more honourable than it is represented. The office of prætor, to which Verus had been previously appointed, required under a vigilant master both industry and capacity; and after his adoption, this pretended minion of the court was sent to take the emperor's place at the head of the Pannonian legions, on the most exposed of the frontiers. Here too he had occasion to exert his prowess in the field, and obtained from the same historian the praise of a respectable, if not a brilliant commander. The sentiment with which in his first hours of weakness he is said to have courted death—that an emperor should die in health and not in sickness—deserves to be recorded in his honour.[1] The expression of his numerous busts is manly as well as handsome, and indicates intelligence, frankness, and liberality, far removed from the common type of Roman beauty, in which regularity of feature and noble bearing scarcely redeem the hard, stern, and narrow character which plainly underlies them. The portraits of Trajan and of Verus seem to belong to climes, ages and races far removed from one another.

But, after all, the wisdom of the choice was not tested by actual results. The health of the new Cæsar began to fail soon after his adoption, and when it was observed that he had not strength to wield the arms of the imperator, Hadrian is said to have exclaimed with bitterness, that he had spent his money to no purpose, and leant on a rotten wall, which could not bear the weight of the republic or even his own.[2] These harsh words

His premature death. A.D. 138. A.U. 891.

[1] Spartian, *Ver.* 6.: "Sæpe dicens, sanum principem mori debere, non debilem."

[2] Spartian, *l. c.*: "Ter millies perdidimus . . . siquidem satis in caducum parietem incubuimus."

were carried to the sick man's ear, and aggravated his disorder. The officious talebearer was disgraced; but this reparation was of no avail, and the invalid expired on the calends of January 138, in the third year of his feeble sovereignty. Hadrian would not suffer the holiday of the new year to be profaned by tokens of public sorrow. For Verus the portals of the colossal mausoleum for the first time opened; but his surviving colleague felt his own end approaching, and became more anxious than ever to provide for the peaceful transmission of power after his decease.[1]

Hadrian chooses for his successor T. Aurelius Antoninus,

It was cited, indeed, as a mark of Hadrian's heartlessness, or levity, that when urged after Verus's death to make a fresh adoption without delay, he replied that he had already formed his resolution while Verus was still living. He commanded numerous busts and statues of his favourite, directed the senate to proclaim his divinity, and allowed temples to be raised to him in various places But after a brief interval he called the most illustrious senators to his bedside in the Tiburtine villa, and announced that his choice of a successor had fallen on T. Aurelius Antoninus, a man of mature age and approved abilities, who seems to have been universally acceptable. At the same time that he made this adoption, he required his new son, who had no male child of his own, to nominate heirs; indicating to him for this preferment Marcus Annius Verus, his own sister's son, and Lucius Verus, the son

and requires him to adopt M. Annius Verus and L. Verus.

[1] The uncertain character of the imperial succession is strongly marked in the instance of Verus. It is nowhere said that he was associated in the empire, as Trajan had been associated by Nerva, or Piso by Galba. Spartian says of him significantly: "Qui primus tantum Cæsaris nomen accepit." Hadrian honoured him, "imperatorio funere;" but the biographer again remarks: "Neque quidquam de regia nisi mortis habuit dignitatem." Nevertheless Ælius Verus has always been enumerated in the imperial series both by ancients and moderns.

of his deceased colleague, the one at the time a youth of seventeen, the other a mere child, and both already favourites with him.[1] Yet the choice of the elder was undoubtedly determined by the promise of his staid yet generous character, and if, in regard to the younger, Hadrian yielded to a natural preference, he might fairly hope the best from an amiable infant to be trained under a parent and a brother of approved virtue. He had now done his best for the future welfare of the empire, and tormented by maladies beyond the reach of medicine, and conscious that his days were numbered, the sense of having well-discharged his greatest duty as a prince may have afforded him relief and consolation. That he gave way under a painful disorder to excessive irritation, and even put innocent persons to death from caprice and vexation, is charged against him by historians whose ill-nature or incapacity is sufficiently apparent.[2] But it became the duty of the gentle Antoninus to soothe his bursts of passion, and shelter those they might threaten to overwhelm; and the gratitude of the senators or courtiers doubtless prompted them to exaggerate the beneficial influence of their patron. The sufferings of the sick man, we are assured, were most acute. Despairing of medical relief, he resorted to the arts of the magicians; but the imprecation of Servianus was fulfilled, that in his agony his last wish should be for death, yet he should be unable to die.[3] Given over by the physicians, and vainly tended by astrologers and diviners, he implored his own attendants to put him out of pain by the sword or poison. To

His increasing infirmities and irritation,

[1] Spartian, *Hadr.* 24.; *Ver.* 7. He excused the adoption of the younger of these with the kindly expression: "Habeat respublica quodcunque de Vero;" which, as the writer remarks, is opposed to the notion put forth by some that he repented of the favour he had shown to the father. Comp. Dion, lxix. 21.

[2] Spartian, *Hadr.* 23. 25.; Victor, *Cæs.* 14., *Epit* 28.

[3] Dion, lxix. 27., lxxvi. 7.

one of his slaves, a barbarian from beyond the Danube, he pointed out the exact spot, which he had ascertained and marked on his breast, where the heart could be reached most promptly and certainly; but the fierce swordsman fled in horror from his presence. It is said that he even swallowed in his despair substances which he knew to be deleterious. At last his powers gave way, and he expired, worn out by a long disease, which seems to have been dropsical.[1] Among his last words, delivered perhaps in a brief interval of ease, was a playful address to his departing spirit, which if it has attained more success than it deserves as a philosophic utterance, betrays at least no sign of the gloomy terror or remorse which haunt, no doubt, the deathbeds of tyrants.[2]

and death. A. D. 138. A. U. 891.

Hadrian died on the tenth day of July, A.D. 138 (A.U. 891), having lived about sixty-two years and a half, and reigned twenty-one years wanting one month. There is none of the emperors about whom we are so much disappointed in the scantiness and questionable character of our materials for estimating him. We must acknowledge, indeed, a general consistency in the impression conveyed by Dion, Spartian, and the still briefer epitomists. All indicate, more or less clearly, the conflicting elements in his varied character, his ear-

Estimate of his character.

[1] Dion, lxix. 22.; Spartian, *Hadr.* 24.

[2] Spartian, *Hadr.* 25. The biographer treats these famous verses very lightly. He adds: "Tales autem, nec multo meliores, fecit et Græcos." To me the force and character of this simple ejaculation consist in its abruptness, brevity, and uncouthness, like the verses we make in a delirious dream. Polished and paraphrased by modern translators, it becomes a trifling commonplace, hardly worthy of the considerable poets who have exercised their talents upon it.

"Animula, vagula, blandula,	Soul of mine, pretty one, flitting one,
Hospes comesque corporis,	Guest and partner of my clay,
Quæ nunc abibis in loca,—	Whither wilt thou hie away,—
Pallidula, rigida, nudula—	Pallid one, rigid one, naked one—
Nec, ut soles, dabis jocos?	Never to play again, never to play?

nestness and his levity, his zeal for knowledge and frivolity in appreciating it, his patient endurance and restless excitability, his generosity and his vanity, his peevishness and his good-nature, his admiration of genius, and at the same time his jealousy of it.[1] Such contradictions may possibly be reconciled by considering the circumstances of the times, and the manifold interests of a complicated civilization combined with the absence of a controlling principle and a guiding object. Not in Hadrian only, but in all the eminent men of his time, Trajan himself being no exception, we miss that unity of aim and complete subordination of all the faculties to a ruling idea, which exalt the man of talent into the man of genius. Nevertheless, if this be true of emperors and statesmen, still more is it true of the lesser men who related the incidents of their careers, and criticized their characters. We may fairly doubt whether the compilers of the meagre abridgments which contain all we know of them, could understand the greatness of any really great men, if such in their own day there were. Dion Cassius, if we may connect with his name the fragments preserved by the manipulations of Xiphilin, may have acquired an idea of Cæsar and Cicero not wholly unworthy of their merit, from the better writers whom he could consult about them; but where left to his own observation, or to the estimate of persons nearly contemporary with himself, he may have completely failed to rise to the true height of the object before him. Of the

[1] Thus Spartian describes him (*Hadr.* 10.) as, "Severus, lætus; comis, gravis; lascivus, cunctator; tenax, liberalis . . . . sævus, clemens; et semper in omnibus varius." Victor (*Epit.* 14.) says: "Varius, multiplex, multiformis; ad vitia atque virtutes quasi arbiter genitus, impetum mentis quodam artificio regens, ingenium invidum, triste, lascivum, et ad ostentationem sui insolens, callide tegebat; continentiam, facilitatem, clementiam simulans, contraque dissimulans ardorem gloriæ quo flagrabat."

feeble biographer Spartianus, it may not be unjust to affirm that he would have spoilt even better materials than the best that lay within his reach. For my own part I am dissatisfied with the portraiture we have received of Hadrian. I cannot think that we have the real man before us. I imagine that he was really greater than he is represented, and that many of the stories to his disparagement have been invented or coloured. But I can only refer this impression to what I remark of the character of his administration, in which he undoubtedly reconciled with eminent success things hitherto found irreconcilable; a contented army and a peaceful frontier; an abundant treasury and a lavish expenditure; a free senate and a stable monarchy; and all this without the lustre of a great military reputation, the foil of an odious predecessor, or disgust at recent civil commotions. But the merit of Hadrian is above all conspicuous in the decision with which, the first of Roman statesmen, he conceived the idea of governing the world as one homogeneous empire. Suddenly, but once for all, he discarded even in theory the tradition of a Roman municipality, as the master and possessor of all the soil of the provinces. He recognised in theory both conquerors and conquered as one people, while he left their practical equalization to the gradual and spontaneous influences which were plainly working thereto. He visited every corner of his dominions, and greeted in person every race among his subjects, making no distinction between Roman and Briton, African and Syrian. The title of citizen might still remain, and certain fiscal immunities, though balanced by countervailing burdens, continue to maintain its nominal pre-eminence; but substantially there was now little difference between the status of the Roman and of his subjects; and even that little was vanishing of its own accord, and wanted only a stroke of the pen to erase it in due time from

the statute-book. But though thus liberal in his own ideas, the prince of the senate had still to humour the prejudices of his nobles. He must not suffer the Roman to degrade himself in his own eyes by indulging unworthy indolence. Accordingly, Hadrian discarded the freedmen of the palace, the instruments whom his predecessors had thrust between themselves and the honourable industry of the knights; he rivalled Augustus himself in the reverence he paid to the toga, the symbol of Roman majesty, and required the senators and knights always to wear it in public. It seems that upon the citizens generally this staid observance could no longer be enforced.[1]

The reign of Hadrian the best of the imperial series.

On the whole, I am disposed to regard the reign of Hadrian as the best of the imperial series, marked by endeavours at reform and improvement in every department of administration in all quarters of the empire. The character of the ruler was mild and considerate, far-seeing and widely observant, while the ebullitions of passion which clouded his closing career were confined at least to the small circle of his connexions and associates. His defects and vices were those of his time, and he was indeed altogether the fullest representative of his time, the complete and crowning product, as far as we can judge, of the crowning age of Roman civilization. His person and countenance, which we have unusual means of figuring to ourselves from the number of his busts, statues and medals, corresponded well with his character. With Hadrian the Roman type of features begins to disappear. Hadrian is neither Greek nor Roman; he is of no race nor country; but rather what we might deem the final result of a blending of

His figure and countenance.

[1] Spartian, *Hadr.* 21, 22. When he saw a slave of his own walking as an equal between two senators, he ordered his ears to be boxed, and forbade him to converse with personages who might at any time become his masters.

many breeds and the purest elements. He reminds us more than any Roman before him, of what we proudly style the thorough English gentleman, with shapely trunk and limbs, and well-set head, no prominent features, no salient expression, but a general air of refinement and blood, combined with spirit and intelligence. His face and figure are both eminently handsome, though inclining to breadth and bulk. His countenance expresses ability rather than genius, lively rather than deep feelings, wide and general sympathies rather than concentrated thought or fixed enthusiasm. The sensual predominates in him over the ideal, the flesh over the spirit; he is an administrator rather than a statesman, a man of taste rather than a philosopher. A casual observer would perhaps hardly notice that Hadrian is the first of the Romans whose bust is distinguished with a beard.[1] Hitherto, though the arrangement of the hair varies from one generation to another, or follows the personal taste of the wearer, every public man at Rome scrupulously shaved his cheeks, lip and chin. But Hadrian Atticized as well as philosophized, and he might reasonably incline to cherish the natural appendage which betokened both the Grecian and the sophist. Some, indeed, whispered that he suffered hair to grow on his chin, to conceal a physical blemish; but this explanation seems far-fetched, and the fashion set by Hadrian and adopted generally by his successors, seems rather to indicate a change in the feelings of the people, and their inclination to disregard the special distinctions of race in deference to views more enlightened and genial.

[1] Spartian, *Hadr.* 26.: "Statura fuit procera, forma comptus, flexo ad pectinem capillo, promissa barba, ut vulnera quæ in facie naturalia erant tegeret."

CHAPTER LXVII.

Early career of the emperor Antoninus Pius.—Attitude of the Barbarians.—The wall of Antoninus in Britain.—His paternal government at home.—His indulgence to the Christians.—His virtues and happiness.—Vices of the empress Faustina.—Early promise of M. Aurelius.—His testimony to the virtues of Antoninus.—Death of Antoninus Pius, and remarks on the character of his epoch.—Review of the political elements of Roman society.—1. The populace of the city.—2. The provincials.—Progress of uniformity.—Extension of the franchise.—Development of the civil law.—3. The senate: its pride, pretensions and imbecility.—4. The prætorians and the legions.—The final supremacy of the soldiers inevitable. (A. D. 138–161. A. U. 891–914.)

Names and titles of the emperor Titus Antoninus Pius.

THE adopted son of Hadrian was in the maturity of his fifty-second year, when he was admitted to a share in the sovereign power. After the fashion then prevalent in the noblest families, he combined in his own person the gentile names of several ancestors. His style at full length had been Titus Aurelius Fulvius Boionius Arrius Antoninus, which he now exchanged for that of Titus Ælius Hadrianus Antoninus, to which he added at once the titular designation of Augustus and Cæsar, and soon after his accession, as we shall presently notice, that of Pius. The name of Aurelius Fulvius had been borne by his father and grandfather, both of whom had been consuls, and whose family was sprung from Nemausus in Gaul.[1] His mother was an Arria, and both an Arrius and a Boionius had been among his maternal ancestors.[2] He was

[1] Capitol. *Anton. P.* 1. The emperor was born at Lanuvium, and educated at Lorium, in Etruria, which became his favourite residence.

[2] Capitol. *l.c.*: "Avus maternus Arrius Antoninus, homo sanctus, et qui Nervam miseratus esset quod imperare cœpisset."

married to an Annia Galeria Faustina, by whom he had had four children, two sons and two daughters; the sons had died young before his advancement, and of one of the daughters we have no further account. The other, however, named Annia Faustina, he united to the young Aurelius, her cousin, whom at Hadrian's instance her father had himself adopted. But of all his names the most interesting is that of Antoninus, which he first introduced to the distinguished place it occupies in Roman annals, the origin of which, however, we can trace no further. Fourteen emperors passed away before this designation, sanctified by the noblest associations, was suffered to disappear from the imperial style.[1] So deep was the impression made on the Romans by the virtues of the two illustrious princes, who assumed the sovereignty at the death of Hadrian with the acclamations of the senate and people, and the loyal consent of the legions. The decease indeed of their late jealous master was felt as a relief by the nobles in the city. They pretended to have trembled for their lives and fortunes during the pangs of his last illness, and in their zeal to do honour to his successor, muttered a refusal to grant him the apotheosis which had been hitherto denied only to the most hateful of tyrants. Antoninus meanwhile removed the body from Baiæ to Rome, and entombed it in the gorgeous mausoleum long

[1] Capitol. *in Opilio Macrin.* 3.: "Enimvero Pius primus, Marcus secundus, Verus tertius, Commodus quartus, quintus Caracallus, sextus Geta, septimus Diadumenus, octavus Heliogabalus Antonini fuere." These eight princes are enumerated to show the fulfilment of a certain prediction; but others, such as Pertinax, Julianus, Severus and Macrinus himself, might be added. Alexander Severus thus addressed the senate: "Antoninorum nomen, vel jam numen potius, quale fuerit, meminit vestra clementia." The senate replied: "Vicisti vitia, vicisti crimina: Antonini nomen ornavisti." But Alexander persisted in declining the name, as not belonging to his family. The senate would have called him Magnus, and at last forced upon him the title of Augustus. Lampridius *in Alex. Sev.* 9. (A. D. 222, A. U. 975.)

prepared for its reception. When the senators observed the respect with which he was disposed to treat it, they discovered another mode of flattery, declaring that he had rescued many of their order from Hadrian's death-warrants, and on this account, or as others said, in acknowledgment of his dutiful affection for his unworthy parent, decreed him the surname of Pius; a surname eagerly repeated by the gratitude of his countrymen, and destined to become the most distinctive of all his appellations.[1] The opposition to Hadrian's consecration was now withdrawn; his temple rose in due time at Rome, and an order of Flamens was appointed to serve for ever at his altar.

He receives the surname of Pius.

In noble simplicity of character, and devotion to the good of the state they were invited to govern, the two Antonines deserved to be classed together. For three and twenty years they sat side by side in public, and were nominally colleagues in the empire: but while the elder governed by virtue of his mature age and tried abilities, the younger trained himself reverently after his parent's example, with assiduous and painful self-examination. Though vying with one another in their noble qualities and the excellence of their administration, in their temper and education there was a marked difference. Aurelius became, by study, reflection, and self-exercise, the most consummate product of the ancient philosophy, while Pius is a

His early career and character.

[1] The origin of this title is variously explained: 1. because Antoninus supported his infirm parent in the senate; 2. because he saved certain senators, as mentioned in the text; 3. because of the honours he extorted from the nobles for his predecessor; 4. because he had taken measures to prevent his suicide; 5. because of the general clemency and goodness of his own character. We may observe that the title first appears on the coins of Antoninus immediately after the death of Hadrian; and that the festival he instituted in honour of Hadrian was specially designated "Pialia." Artemidorus, writing in Greek, calls it εὐσέβεια. Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.* vii. 36.

singular instance of an accomplished Roman contenting himself with the practice of virtue and genuine morality, disregarding the questions of the schools. From his early years Antoninus had been engaged in the active discharge of official duties. Sprung from a race of curule magistrates, he had been bred in the traditional maxims of official life, and had become qualified for distinction himself by long training in the career of honours under an able and vigilant emperor. Thence he had succeeded to the government of a province. He had been appointed one of the four consulars to whom the administration of Italy was confided, and had finally been raised to the prefecture of Asia before Hadrian's experienced eye fixed on him, as the fittest man in the empire to lighten his own burdens, and conduct the machine he had put in good working gear by his long labours.[1] Antoninus, however, though himself a simple man of business, could respect speculation in others, and encouraged his adopted son to employ his leisure, while yet young, in examining the bases of wisdom and virtue under the ablest teachers.

Unanimous testimony of antiquity to his virtues.

Alone of all the chiefs of the empire, Antoninus has had the fortune to escape the animadversion of the historian Dion. Reduced as we are at this period to the meagre epitome of Xiphilin, the book which was devoted to the narrative of this reign had perished, save a few brief sentences, even before the time of the abbreviator; and instead of the harsh and captious commentary with which Dion reviewed the career of the emperors, we have only the flowing panegyric of Capitolinus, which, if devoid of critical sagacity, is free at least from the vice of ill-nature. The brief notices of Antoninus found elsewhere, as in the abridgments of Victor and Eutropius, seem to have been derived from

[1] Capitol. *Anton. P.* 3.

kindred sources with those of the biographer, while the Christian Orosius concurs in the unvaried strain of panegyric; for of all the princes of this age Antoninus alone was free from the sin of persecution. It is a relief indeed from the chequered tissues of splendid virtues and degrading vices, to meet once at least in the course of our long review with a character of unstained goodness, with one man faultless, as far as we can trace him, in act and intention, and yet not wanting in manly sense and vigour. Trajan governed the empire from the camp and the frontiers; Hadrian from the provinces and the schools; Antoninus devoted himself entirely to Rome, and during his long reign of nearly a quarter of a century never absented himself for a day from the city or its near environs. He had seen that even the peaceful progress of the emperor through the provinces, however personally frugal, became an occasion of severe exactions.[1] But the genuine moderation of this practical sage enabled him to maintain throughout his career unbroken harmony between the prince and the senate. He made on his accession the customary declaration, that none of the order should suffer death by his sentence; a declaration which pledged him to moderation and economy, that he might not be constrained to recruit his finances by confiscation. This promise he kept faithfully to the end. We hear indeed of more than one conspirator against him; but of these Attilius was proscribed without his concurrence by the senate; Priscianus slew himself, and the emperor forbade inquiry to be made for his accomplices. It would be small satisfaction, he said, to learn by such investigations that he was hated by a number of his fellow-citizens.[2] Once only, in the

[1] Capitol. *Anton. P.* 7.: "Gravem esse provincialibus comitatum principis etiam nimis parci."

[2] Capitol. *l. c.*; Victor, *Epit.* 15. The particulars of these conspiracies have not reached us. Attilius bore the surname of Tatianus

case of a parricide, he sentenced a noble culprit to confinement on a desert island, where nature herself would, as he said, justly forbid him to exist.[1] While however all the public establishments were maintained on the most frugal scale, he was munificent in his gifts and largesses. He acquitted the promises of Hadrian at his adoption, completed many of his predecessor's buildings, and remitted the coronary gold expected on his accession, to the Italians entirely, to the extent of one-half to the provincials.[2] When the treasury, which he received full from Hadrian, became at last empty, he replenished it by the sale of the imperial furniture.[3]

Threatened disturbances on the frontiers.

But the reign of three-and-twenty years on which the pious Antonine was now entering, was not destined to the enjoyment of unruffled tranquillity. The troubled state of the frontiers was a source of constant anxiety and expense; and even within them some elements of disturbance still required the establishments of the empire to be maintained in full vigour. The Jews, so often quelled and so ruthlessly down-trampled, chafed and murmured both in Achaia and Egypt; the nomades of the Atlas ventured again to encroach on the zone of cultivation which was only won from the sands by constant labour, and secured by an armed occupation. The Dacians did not quietly resign themselves to the yoke; and the Alani, a name which had recently become formidable, were ever prowling along the bank of the Ister, or in front of Trajan's ramparts, watching an opportunity of bursting into Mœsia. Of the operations conducted against these various enemies no accounts have been transmitted to us. Incessant and harassing as the warfare may have

or Attianus; from which we may conjecture that he was connected with Hadrian's guardian, and therefore himself a relative of the late ruler.

[1] Capitol. *Anton. P.* c. 8. [2] Capitol. c. 4. [3] Capitol. c. 7.

been, it led to no triumphs, and probably to no decisive victories. The mild and peaceful prince, who proclaimed that it was better to save a single citizen than to slay a thousand enemies, followed perhaps the example of his predecessors in purchasing the forbearance of the invaders.[1] In Britain, however, we learn that the prefect, Lollius Urbicus, after chastising a revolt of the Brigantes, carried his arms beyond the frontier, and completed the defences of Agricola with a continuous rampart of earth from the Clyde to the Forth.[2] The Roman occupation was now definitively extended to the upper isthmus, while its outworks were pushed perhaps in some directions still further. The district between the walls of Hadrian and Antoninus was rapidly filled with monuments of southern civilization. The spirit of colonization and enterprise seems, at least in this quarter, to have been as active now as at any previous period. But the reason why, wherever the limits of Roman power extended, the subjects of Rome continually advanced a little further, is to be found in the ardent desire of the provincials to escape from the pressure of their local burdens, without placing themselves beyond reach of assistance, or cutting off the means of a timely retreat.[3]

The wall of Antoninus between the Clyde and Forth.

[1] This sentiment, it seems, was ascribed to one of the Scipios, but it does not appear on what authority. Capitol. *Anton. P.* 9.: "Ut Scipionis sententiam frequentarit, qua ille dicebat, malle se unum civem servare quam mille hostes occidere."

[2] The coins of Antoninus bear Imp. II. in the year 139; and this title was probably assumed for some successes over the Caledonians. Clinton in ann. He was one of the few emperors down to this period who never celebrated a triumph. Victor, *Cæs.* 15.: "Nisi forte triumphorum expertem socordiæ videtur: quod longe secus est."

[3] The ichnography of the wall of Antoninus is delineated and described in Stuart's *Caledonia Romana*, and the few inscriptions collected. The remains are far less than those of the lower isthmus, and have suffered considerably since the time of Roy's survey. The portion best preserved is about a mile in length near Polwarth, where the rampart has been protected by a plantation. I presume

On the whole the historians describe the external policy of Antoninus as singularly successful. The authority of the empire was raised to its highest pitch, and acknowledged by the most distant nations. Rome, under the most peaceful of her princes, imposed a king upon the Lazi, who dwelt beyond the Phasis. She withheld the Parthian sultan from attacking Armenia by the terror of a proclamation alone, while she refused to restore the celebrated throne captured by Trajan, and so often redemanded.[1] She determined the quarrels of various Eastern rulers with their rivals or subjects. She appeased the differences between Greeks and Scythians on the shores of the Cimmerian peninsula, and on the banks of the great Sarmatian rivers. Appian declares that he had seen at this time at Rome the envoys of barbarian tribes, who had offered to place themselves under the yoke of the mighty conquerors, but whose allegiance had been quietly declined.[2] While the counsel of Augustus, not to extend the limits of the empire, sank deeper than ever into the minds of statesmen, the tendency of the vast body to attract smaller bodies to itself was still in force, and required stedfast self-control to resist it. The reign of Antoninus gave rise to more than one signal monument of the size and unity of the empire in its greatest permanent extension. The great work of Claudius Ptolemæus, if founded on the principles of Hip-

Success of the external policy of Antoninus.

that Falkirk, which stands on the line, is the church on the Pfalz or Pale. There is said to be no vestige of a stone rampart. From the absence of later inscriptions, the defence of the wall seems to have been relinquished at an early period, but coins have been found along it of the date of Diocletian and Constantine.

[1] Capitol. *Anton. P.* 9. On a medal of Antoninus Pius we find the legend: "Rex Armenis datus," but to the event itself we have no other clue. Another has: "Rex Quadis datus." Smyth, *Roman Medals*, p. 119.

[2] Appian, *Proœm.* c. 7. Comp. Victor, *Epit.* 15.: "Quin etiam Indi, Bactriani, Hyrcani legatos misere, justitia tanti imperatoris comperta."

parchus, Eratosthenes, and Marinus, deserved, from its extensive observations and systematic arrangement, to become the standard work on mathematical geography.[1] The Itinerary, designated by the name of Antoninus, describes the course of the highways, and the distances of every station, from the Wall of Hadrian to the Cataracts of the Nile[2]; while the Periplus of the Euxine, and that of the Erythræan Sea, ascribed to Arrian, show the relations of Roman commerce and navigation with coasts and colonies even beyond the limits of Roman sovereignty.

Paternal government of Antoninus.

The list of the emperors is not wanting in names of men who deserved well of mankind for their benevolence and wisdom: we can discern, perhaps, taking a wider view of their policy than was possible for their contemporaries, indications among them of a genuine love of clemency and justice, which their historians have failed to notice. But the consent of antiquity plainly declares that Antoninus was the first, and, saving his colleague and successor Aurelius, the only one of them who devoted himself to the task of government with a single view to the happiness of his people. Throughout the meagre notices of his career which alone remain to us, we discover no trace of a selfish thought or passion, none of carelessness or precipitation, none of pride or even of pardonable vanity. Every step, every act, seems to have been weighed by a good heart carefully directed to a definite end. It had

[1] The latitudes and longitudes of Marinus of Tyre were adapted to a plane projection of the earth's surface. Ptolemy applied them to the sphere.

[2] The "Itinerarium Antonini" may be so called from Antoninus Pius, from his successor Aurelius Antoninus, or from Antoninus Caracalla. The work underwent, no doubt, many revisions at different epochs. That on which our editions are founded seems to have been as late as Diocletian. See *Itiner. Anton.*, ed. Parthey: præf. p. vi. The Itinerary of Jerusalem is doubtless a later work, though compiled from ancient sources.

been said in praise of Augustus, that he was the *Paterfamilias* of the whole empire: but the head of a Roman family was at best a beneficent despot, standing aloof, in haughty dignity, from the caresses of wife and children, and exacting obedience from their fear rather than their affection; while among his slaves he was a tyrant, self-willed alike in kindness and in cruelty. Antoninus was the father of his subjects in a different sense.[1] The time had come when, both in the state and in the family, the sense of mutual rights and obligations made itself felt. The rule of an Antonine over Romans and provincials, freedmen and slaves, could be less unequal and partial than that of an Augustus, both from the nearer approach of all classes to equality, and from the higher elevation of the emperor above all. Formerly it was the greatest praise of a just ruler that he controlled the injustice of his officers, and repressed their wanton exactions. Now the procurators of the fiscus could be specially directed to exercise moderation in extorting even their legitimate dues, to spare the needy, to indulge the unfortunate; and they were required to render strict account of their proceedings. Every complaint against the powerful found ready attention. The informers who lived by denouncing defaulters to the treasury, a class whom it had once been necessary to foster, could now be firmly repressed; the revenues were to be collected fairly and openly, or not collected at all. Antoninus took no pleasure in gain derived from the sufferings of his people. The salaries of idle and inefficient officers were reduced, while by allowing good governors to remain many years in their posts, he abated at least the first access of their cupidity.[2] But Antoninus sought to acquaint himself with the condition

[1] Victor, *Epit.* 15.: "Quæ incredibili diligentia ad speciem optimi patris familias exsequebatur."
[2] Capitol. *Anton. P.* 5.

and resources of all his subjects, and mastered the intricacies of fiscal science, as then understood. His judicious economy might give offence to some who could not appreciate its rare merit, and hence arose perhaps the only invidious epithet that was ever applied to him.[1] Once for all, on attaining the sovereign power he set a noble example of disinterestedness in surrendering his private fortune to the uses of the state.[2]

His munificence, buildings and legislation.

Simple, however, and moderate as Antoninus showed himself in his personal tastes, the splendour of the imperial authority suffered no diminution in his hands. His largesses to the people, and his shows in the circus, fully maintained the scale of magnificence to which they had been raised by the rivalry of previous sovereigns.

A. D. 147. A. U. 900.

The secular games with which he celebrated the nine-hundredth anniversary of the city were worthy of the solemn occasion.[3] Antoninus continued to adorn Rome. To him are due the completion of Hadrian's mausoleum, and the erection of a graceful column, though inferior in height to Trajan's or to that raised afterwards by Aurelius; he is believed to have built also the amphitheatre at Nismes and the aqueduct of the Pont-du-Gard, the noblest monument of Roman grandeur beyond the Alps.[4] He extended and improved the Academic system, the most marked characteristic of the Flavian administration, with the feeling, not of a pedant, but

[1] Xiphilin (Dion, lxx. 3.) says he was called κυμινοπριστής, or pea-splitter (comp. Zonar. xii. 1.), referring, probably, to the raillery of Silenus in Julian's "Cæsars."

[2] Capitol. *Anton. P.* 8.

[3] Victor, *Cæs.* 15.: "Celebrato magnifice urbis nongentesimo."

[4] A fuller but not a complete list of these structures is given by Capitolinus, c. 8. The column is interesting from the sculpture on the base, which represents the apotheosis of Antoninus and Faustina. The emperor, seated between the wings of his Genius, or of his own soul, ascends to heaven, preserving the unruffled composure which distinguished him upon earth.

of a liberal and accomplished gentleman.[1] His long and tranquil reign was farther illustrated by the progress of legal science, Antoninus being himself active in dispensing justice, and gathering about him many expert jurisconsults, among whom the names of Ummidius Verus, Salvius Valens, Volusius Montanus, Ulpius Marcellus, and Javolenus are specially recorded. The contributions of this emperor to the imperial code are known to us in two or three instances only, all marked by their leaning to principles of equity and humanity. In wisdom, in science, and in temper he equally deserved to be designated the Numa of imperial Rome.[2] But the great merit of this paternal ruler was the activity with which he interposed for the protection of the Christians. The proclamations he addressed to the Larissæans, the Thessalonians, the Athenians, and to the Greeks generally, are specially mentioned, in which he proclaimed and guarded the indulgence already nominally accorded to the believers by Trajan and Hadrian.[3]

His indulgence to the Christians.

[1] Antoninus composed his own harangues, which was not, it seems, the case with all his predecessors. Several of these were still extant, in the time of his biographer. Capitol. *Anton. P.* 11.

[2] Capitol. *Anton. P.* 2.; Victor, *Epit.* 15.; Eutrop. *Breviar.* viii. 8.; Dion, lxx. 5.: *οὗτος ὁ βασιλεὺς* Ἀντωνῖνος *ἄριστος ἦν καὶ μάλιστα Νουμᾷ κατὰ τὸ τῆς ἡγεμονίας ὁμοιότροπον ἄξιος παραβάλλεσθαι, καθάπερ δὴ* Ῥωμύλῳ Τραϊανὸς *ὤφθη παραπλήσιος.*

[3] Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 13. 26.; Dion, lxx. 3. We may perhaps connect these addresses to the Grecian communities with the Jewish disturbances in that quarter. The Jews followed, no doubt, their old habit of attacking the Christians, and throwing the blame of the disorders on them. Antoninus enforced the rule that inquisition should not be made into Christian tenets. Oros. vii. 14.: "Justinus philosophus librum pro Christiana religione compositum Antonino tradidit, benignumque eum erga Christianos fecit." Nevertheless Antoninus was not indifferent, like Hadrian, to the religion of the state. An existing inscription celebrates his regard for the established ceremonial: "Optimo maximoque principi, et cum summa benignitate justissimo, ob insignem erga cæremonias publicas curam ac religionem." Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.* vii. 29. The coins of Antoninus abound in references to the oldest Roman mythology.

Singular happiness of Antoninus Pius.

If we turn to the private character of this estimable ruler, we find it marked with a dignified tenderness which is interesting as a token of the period. The harshness of the Romans in their public transactions, and the rigid sternness with which they acted in political life, are strangely contrasted, throughout their history, with the features of gentleness and kindness which meet us in their private behaviour. But at no period was this contrast more marked than under the early emperors, and no portion of their literature exhibits so many traits of domestic goodness as that which belonged to the age of Nero and Domitian, and embraces the pages of Seneca and the younger Pliny. At last the quality of feminine gentleness which underlay the rough exterior of many a Roman warrior, which gleams on the surface in Virgil, Horace, and Ovid, and may be descried beneath the rougher lineaments of Lucan and Persius, Quintilian and Juvenal, which lurks under the grim reserve even of Tacitus, and the ill-veiled melancholy of Statius and Martial, is raised to the throne of the world in the person of Antonine the Pious. The characteristic of this virtuous prince is cheerfulness. Doubtless he would have been less at ease had he been more of a philosopher. But his happy temperament seems to have exempted him from the painful questionings which beset the men of his time who thought as deeply as they felt. He was content with the policy of his epoch, content with its society, content with its religion; he was satisfied with the present, not anxious about the future; while the goodness of his heart and his natural rectitude withheld him from the selfish indulgences which leave a sting behind them. He possessed the principles of the Epicurean with the practice of the Stoic; and this union constitutes perhaps the fairest compound that Heathenism could supply. Antoninus was apparently the happiest man

of whom heathen history makes mention; and I can well believe that he practically effected more good than any other.

Anecdotes of his mildness and forbearance in private life.

The attainment of power had wrought a marked change in almost all the earlier Cæsars; in some for the better, but generally for the worse. In Antoninus it made no change at all. Such as he had been, kind, modest, and dignified, as a senator, such he continued to be as emperor. He bore himself in all respects towards his inferiors as he had formerly wished his superiors to bear themselves towards him. If he demanded an appointment or other advantage for a friend, he never allowed himself to dispense with the forms of law and custom. With his associates he lived on the same terms as ever. He assembled them at his table, or presented himself at theirs, and rejoiced especially in their company at the genial ceremonies of the vintage. He stooped easily, say his biographers, from the imperial summit to the level of civil life, and cheerfully endured the raillery current in the polite circles of the city.[1] Preceding emperors, indeed, had mixed on equal terms with their nobles; Antoninus was patient with the populace, and treated their ill-temper with forbearance. On the occasion of a dearth in the city, the people assailed him with stones; but he only applied himself the more assiduously to supply their wants, and studied to explain to them the measures he had adopted in their behalf. When prefect of Asia, he had once resorted to the splendid dwelling of Polemon the wealthy sophist. The owner was absent. On his return he was offended, such was his arrogance, at the freedom taken by the governor, and insisted on his great but unbidden guest vacating his apartments, and going forth at

[1] Capitol. *Anton. P.* 6.: "Imperatorium fastigium ad summam civilitatem deduxit;" and adds, "unde plus crevit." Comp. the anecdote of Omullus, c. 11.

midnight to seek another lodging. Polemon was a favourite with Hadrian, and the emperor, though vexed perhaps at his impertinence, was anxious to protect him after his own death from the consequences of a quarrel with his future sovereign. Accordingly, he inserted in his will a statement that his choice of Antoninus had been actually made at the sophist's suggestion. Antoninus could not be deceived by this device; nevertheless he acted as if he believed it, and heaped his favours on the fortunate Polemon. When at last the sophist presented himself at Rome, the new emperor commanded that he should be accommodated with lodgings, insisting archly that no one should venture to remove him. An actor complained, soon afterwards, that Polemon, when presiding at the Olympic games, had once driven him off the stage. *At what hour?* demanded Antoninus. *At midday. Ah,* replied he, *he expelled me from his house at midnight.*[1]

Domestic life of Antoninus.

In the absence of public memorials, the whole interest of this epoch must centre in the person and family of the prince. Nor shall we regret to rest for a moment on the character of one so blameless and attractive, and to picture to ourselves the master of the Roman world in the bosom of his private connexions. Antoninus resided, as we have seen, wholly in Rome or his neighbouring villas, of which Lorium on the Etruscan coast, and Lanuvium, his own birthplace, among the Alban hills, seem to have been his favourites. His mode of life was simple and abstemious; his robe was woven by the handmaids of his own consort. But Faustina was unfortunately no Lucretia, and the vices of this licentious woman infused perhaps the only drop of gall in the cup of her husband. Yet Antoninus did not allow himself to resent, or appear even to notice

[1] Philost. *Vit. Sophist.* i. 25.

the scandal she brought on an establishment of antique severity.[1] Faustina was the sister of Ælius Verus, and had been married to Antoninus before his adoption. This adoption, indeed, he may have at least partly owed to the affection Hadrian naturally bore to the sister of his lost favourite; and it was the consciousness, perhaps, of this obligation that induced the injured husband to wink at her irregularities. On assuming the purple, he obtained for her the title of Augusta; he gave the name of Faustinian to the endowments he made for the support of female orphans; and on her death, which happened in 141, only three years after his accession, he raised a temple in her honour, the remains of which, bearing his own name conjointly with hers, still form a striking object in the Roman forum.[2] Games were celebrated in honour of her apotheosis, and her image was borne among those of the national divinities. The coinage on which her name is perpetuated is still unusually abundant, and is generally marked with devices asserting her eternal godhead. After the decease of his children's mother, Antoninus refrained from introducing another matron into his house on the footing of legitimate marriage, and contented himself, after the fashion of the most discreet and dignified Romans, with the inferior union known to their jurisprudence by the now degraded title of concubinage.[3]

Licentious character of the empress Faustina.

Her death and consecration. A. D. 141. A. U. 894.

[1] Capitol. *Anton. P.* 3.: "De hujus uxore multa dicta sunt ob nimiam libertatem et vivendi facilitatem, quæ ille cum animi dolore compressit."

[2] The inscription recording the names of the emperor and empress is still legible: "Divo Antonino et Divæ Faustinæ ex S. C." Capitol. *Anton. P.* 6.: "Tertio anno imperii sui Faustinam uxorem perdidit, quæ a senatu consecrata est, delatis circensibus atque templo."

[3] The regard of Antoninus for the unworthy Faustina is further attested by an expression in a letter to the rhetorician Fronto: "Mallem mehercule Gyaris cum illa quam sine illa in Palatio vivere." Fronton. *Epist.* i. 2.

Both the sons of Antoninus and Faustina seem, a has been said, to have died before Hadrian's deceas On their parent's adoption, it had been arrange that his daughter, the younger Faustina, should b

Marriage of Aurelius to the younger Faustina.

betrothed to Commodus Verus, the chil whom he was required himself to adopt together with M. Aurelius, while Aurelius was to take in marriage a daughter of the elder Verus. But the younger Verus was but seven years of age, while Aurelius had attained to seventeen. The character of the one was as yet at least undetermined, while the other had already given excellent promise, and was daily advancing in every virtue.[1] Accordingly, Antoninus, making the immature age of Verus his excuse, did not hesitate so far to violate Hadrian's intentions as to give Faustina to Aurelius. The union was solemnized, but not perhaps without some years' interval; for the births from this marriage, of which there were several, date from a somewhat later period.

Meanwhile the young Cæsars grew up to manhood,

Early years and promise of M. Aurelius Antoninus.

and the paternal care of Antoninus was not unrewarded with regard to either. Verus was of a light impressible character, easily moulded to good or evil, and though he exhibited none of the qualities demanded of a ruler, he seems at least to have shown as yet no proneness to vice. But Aurelius, on the other hand, fulfilled with advancing years every hope and wish the fondest and wisest of parents could have cherished. He engaged in all the athletic and martial exercises which befitted a youth

[1] The opinion Hadrian already formed of his simplicity and integrity is marked by the appellation of "Verissimus" instead of Verus, which he playfully bestowed upon him. Capitol. *in M. Anton. Philosoph* 1. It must be remembered that the young Aurelius bore also the name of Verus. The biographer distinguishes the two Antonines by the titles of "Pius" and "Philosophus." Other writers generally designate the second by [illegible]" or by his prænomen "Marcus."

of family; but his own temper, and still more perhaps some weakness of constitution and lack of animal spirits, disposed him by preference to study.[1] To the cares of public administration he devoted his patient attention; but his heart was in the libraries of ancient wisdom, or with its best living expositors; for these he reserved the hours borrowed from sleep or recreation; and throughout his father's reign, he never, it is said, was tempted to quit his closet at Rome but for two nights.[2] The time was coming when the pale student of the Palatine would be required to pass his days in the saddle and his nights under canvas, on the wildest frontiers of the empire; but however ill his training might be adapted to harden his frame against fatigue and inclement seasons, the lessons of patience and endurance he learned from his masters, imbibed by a congenial spirit, sufficed to fortify him in the career to which duty called him. Disposed by his own loving temper to reverence parental authority, he was animated by the approbation of a father whom he could justly admire. When, many years after his accession to complete sovereignty, he reviewed in an address to his conscience, his own principles and conduct, he could refer them with affection and gratitude to that model of all

[1] Both the Cæsars seem to have had similar advantages of education. The names of their numerous teachers are carefully recorded. Of Aurelius it is said: "Usus est magistris ad prima elementa Euphranore literatore, et Gemino comœdo, musico Androne, eodemque geometra: quibus omnibus, ut disciplinarum auctoribus, plurimum detulit. Usus præterea grammaticis, &c. . . . usus est oratoribus, &c. . . . usus est etiam Commodo magistro . . . usus est et Apollonio Chalcedonio, Stoico philosopho. . . . Audivit et Sextum Chæronensem, Plutarchi nepotem, &c. Studuit et juri audiens, &c. . . . frequentavit et declamatorum scholas," &c. Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 2, 3. Of the teachers of Verus a list nearly as long and various is given. *Ver.* 2.

[2] Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 7. It was mentioned as a token of his devotion to philosophy, that he attended the school of the teacher Apollonius even after his elevation to the purple.

human excellence. Though himself an ardent lover of speculative philosophy, he had wisely sought a practical director in the conduct of affairs, and he seems to acknowledge that the virtues of Antoninus had served him better than even the doctrines of Zeno. After enumerating his special obligations to his ancestors, his friends, and his instructors, for their good advice or precious examples, he concludes with an encomium on his imperial parent, on which, lingering as we fondly do over this brightest type of heathen excellence, we shall willingly dwell yet another moment:—*In my father I noticed mildness of manners and firmness of resolution, contempt of vain glory, industry in business, accessibility to all who had counsel to give on public matters, and care in allowing to everyone his due share of consideration. He knew when to relax, as well as when to labour; he taught me to forbear from licentious indulgences; to conduct myself as an equal among equals; to lay on my friends no burden of servility; neither changing them capriciously, nor passionately addicting myself to any. From him I learnt to acquiesce in every fortune, and bear myself calmly and serenely; to exercise foresight in public affairs, and not to be above examining the smallest matters; to rise superior to vulgar acclamations, and despise vulgar reprehension; to worship the gods without superstition, and serve mankind without ambition: in all things to be sober and stedfast, not led away by idle novelties; to be content with little, enjoying in moderation the comforts within my reach, but never repining at their absence. Moreover, from him I learnt to be no sophist, no schoolman, no mere dreaming bookworm; but apt, active, practical, and a man of the world; yet, at the same time, to give due honour to true philosophers; to be neat in person, cheerful in demeanour, regular in exercise, and thus to rid my-*

His description of his adoptive father.

self of the need of medicine and physicians. Again, to concede without a grudge their pre-eminence to all who specially excel in legal or any other knowledge; to act in all things after the usage of our ancestors, yet without pedantry. . . . My father was ever prudent and moderate; he neither indulged in private buildings, nor in excessive largesses, or extravagant shows to the people. He looked to his duty only, not to the opinion that might be formed of him. He was temperate in the use of baths, modest in dress, indifferent to the beauty of his slaves and furniture. Such, I say, was the whole character of his life and manners: nothing harsh, nothing excessive, nothing rude, nothing which betokened roughness and violence. It might be said of him, as of Socrates, that he could both abstain from and enjoy the things which men in general can neither abstain from at all, nor enjoy without excess.[1]

Figure of Antoninus Pius.

Such is the portrait of this paragon of humanity, drawn by one who knew him, and drawn, as it appears, without exaggeration. The testimony of Aurelius may well be credited, confirmed as it is by the concurrent voice of Xiphilin, Orosius, Victor, and Capitolinus. These moral excellences were set off by a noble figure and expression: the numerous busts and medals of Antoninus agree in representing him as one of the finest in personal appearance of the whole line of Cæsars.[2] Rome enjoyed the blessing of his administration for the long period of twenty-three years, and at the ripe age of seventy-four he was carried off at Lorium by gastric fever.[3] Feeling his end approaching, he confirmed

[1] M. Aurel. *Commentariorum*, i. 16. The proper title of the volume which I thus designate for convenience, and which is sometimes cited as *Meditationes*, or *de Vitâ Suâ*, is τῶν εἰς ἑαυτόν: "An Address to Himself."

[2] Victor, *Epit.* 15.: "Vultu sereno et pulcro, procerus membra, decenter validus."

[3] Antoninus Pius was associated in the empire Feb. 138: he suc-

in the presence of his chief officers the choice he had made of Aurelius for his successor. To this object of love and hope he recommended the care of his daughter and of the state; then, divesting himself of the ensigns of sovereignty, he commanded the golden image of Fortune which the emperors set up in their inner chamber, to be transported to the apartment of his designated heir. In the delirium which followed, the good old man was heard to mutter about the welfare of the republic; and in the moments of returning sense which preceded his decease, gave to the tribune of his guard the watchword *Equanimity*.[1]

His composure in death.

This anecdote indeed may well have been the invention of a later period, so aptly does it correspond not only with the traditional character of the man to whom it is ascribed, but with the temper of the epoch itself, which in the eyes of succeeding generations he represented.[2] Equanimity of mind, composure of demeanour, were the distinguishing traits of the good Antoninus; and they seem to have been the result of his well-balanced nature, rather than the product of education and reflection.[3] As regards the period also which he illustrated by his virtues, there now occurs a pause

The epoch of Antoninus Pius.

ceeded to Hadrian July 10, 138, and died March 7, 161; accordingly he reigned from the first date twenty-three years and about one month, from the second, twenty-two years and nearly eight months. His age was 74 years, 5 months, 16 days. Clinton, *Fast. Rom.* ann. 161; but the statements of our authorities do not exactly correspond with one another.

[1] Capitol. *Anton. P.* 12; *M. Anton. Philos.* 7.

[2] Thus similar stories of the last words of later emperors, the "laboremus" of Severus, the "militemus" of Pertinax, seem to have a mythic significance.

[3] Victor, *Cæs.* 15.: "Adeo æqualis, probisque moribus, uti plane docuerit, neque jugi pace, ac longo otio absoluta ingenia corrumpi." The solemnity of his consecration seems to have called forth a genuine enthusiasm. Capitol. *Anton. P.* in fin.: "A senatu divus est appellatus cunctis certatim adnitentibus, cum omnes ejus pietatem, clementiam, ingenium, sanctimoniam laudarent."

in the life of the Roman people, from the momentary equilibrium of conflicting forces. The turbulent career of Roman affairs may be likened to the stream beginning as a mountain torrent in constant uproar and irritation, gradually gaining the compact energy of a river, majestic in its collected force, but ready to boil into fury if impeded by a sudden obstacle, widening at last and deepening into a placid lake, in which the eye can scarce detect the direction of the current. But the mightiest rivers, after expanding into such inland seas, are sometimes again abruptly straitened by encroaching cliffs and ledges, and their languid serenity, so much admired and trusted, proves only the *torrent's stillness ere it dash below.* So it was with the empire of the Cæsars. The reign of the elder Antonine was like the Erie of the great St. Lawrence; and when his successor received the fatal sceptre, the fitful stream was already rushing with resistless though yet unruffled rapidity to the verge of the Niagara, in which its repose and dignity were to be engulfed.[1]

Review of the political elements of Roman society at this period.

To this extreme verge I am about to lead the reader before I commit him to the care of a firmer and more experienced guide, who may teach him to look into the abyss without dismay or dizziness. But before commencing my final chapter I will ask him to pause for a moment with me, and review rapidly the chief elements of political society at this eventful epoch.

1. The populace of the city.

I. The world could not be governed by the local municipality of an Italian city. Dimly conscious of the necessity of unfolding wider principles, Augustus had invented his abortive

[1] Thus Statius also describes a pause in the career of the "headlong Anio." *Sylv.* i. 3. 20:

> "Ipse Anien (miranda fides), infraque superque
> Saxeus, hic tumidam rabiem spumosaque ponit
> Murmura; ceu placidi veritus turbare Vopisci
> Pieriosque dies, et habentes carmina somnos."

scheme for the representation of more remote communities. The failure of this feeble attempt to invigorate the popular assembly was followed by the suppression of the assembly itself under Tiberius. The trifling part henceforth conceded to the people in ratifying the legislation of their rulers hardly deserves consideration. The real value of the urban suffrage had lain in the importance it gave the electors in the eyes of candidates; and for this and the substantial advantages it secured them, the plebeian had accepted the toils and risks of military service. But from the moment when the suffrage was taken from him, he declined enlistment. He flung away his sword at the same time that he surrendered his privileges.[1] This voluntary disarming was not unpleasing to the emperors. The commons of the city, forming a great national guard under officers of their own election, as in the free state, would have effectually controlled the princeps and the imperator, until at least they had mutually destroyed one another. Unarmed as they now were, they might raise disturbances and seditions, but they could not overthrow governments. We have seen the anxiety with which the emperors provided for their support and amusement, and how they winked at the factions of the theatre and circus, as a vent for popular caprice. Claudius and even the virtuous Antoninus were pelted in the forum, and meekly endured the insult. Nero despised the murmurs of the senate, so long as he could command the acclamations of the mob. Nevertheless we must not suppose that the mass of the citizens at Rome exercised any real political influence. A prince who was firm in the support of the senate or the legions had no cause to fear them. Tiberius,

[1] There was a partial revival of the comitia under Trajan. Plin. *Paneg.* 63. 77. If his military schemes required him to levy soldiers in the city, he might seek to compensate the citizens by infusing a little more vigour into the old machinery of the Campus Martius.

the most cautious of the Cæsars, who had been fain to restore to the people a favourite statue which he had removed from the baths to his own palace, did not hesitate to require the prompt suppression of a tumult, and to reprimand the magistrates who had weakly succumbed to it.[1] Caius, Domitian, and others indulged their moody cruelty towards all classes indiscriminately. Hadrian rebuked the mob with haughty dignity. The masses of the free population were in fact politically helpless. They were detached from the nobles, their natural leaders, by the habits of mutual independence and distrust which their princes had fostered in both classes. Steeped in slothfulness and poverty they had neither intelligence nor resources. Mingled and confounded with the crowd of enfranchised slaves of foreign origin and ideas, they had lost the traditions of race, which had formerly bound the Roman citizens together, and gave them confidence in one another. Disarmed, disorganized, and untrained, it was impossible for them to act against the moral weight of the wealthy and the noble, still more against the sword and spear of the legionaries and prætorians. They had now ceased altogether to be counted among the political forces of the empire. We may dismiss them henceforth from our consideration.

Contempt into which they had fallen.

II. If we now extend our view from the mass of the citizens within the walls of the capitol to the much larger mass of citizens beyond them, we shall meet with an object of greater interest, if not of more real political importance. The emperors seem for the most part to have worked deliberately in favour of their foreign subjects, enlarging the sphere of Roman citizenship, and generalizing the principles of Roman jurisprudence. They had not the genius, nor perhaps the wish, to

2. The population of the provinces.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* vi. 13.; Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxxiv. 19. 6.

create a new constitution for the empire; but taking the Roman municipality for their model, they contrived by a series of laborious experiments to apply its principles to the inferior races.* The freeman of the imperial commonwealth, though long deprived of his legislative and elective privileges, was distinguished from the stranger within the same borders by exemption from certain fiscal burdens, and subjection to a special code of laws. The internal history of the empire, obscure as it is, turns chiefly on the extension of the Roman franchise in the provinces.

Extension of the Roman franchise.

Roman citizenship had its drawbacks as well as its advantages. When after a desperate struggle the franchise was conceded to the states of Italy, it was discovered, with surprise, that the boon was after all but little relished, and was in fact wholly declined by large numbers of the people who had just made it the watchword of a sanguinary struggle. The Social War had been really fought for the chiefs of the Italians, not for the people. The leaders of the confederates contended for a share in the emoluments of foreign conquest. They expected that the franchise would raise them to the rank of knights or senators of the conquering state, to the control of her revenues, or the command of her armies. But the mass of their followers submitted blindly to their guidance, and when at last they opened their eyes on the morrow of their victory, were appalled at the prospect of the burdens and obligations which would now fall to their share. The Roman franchise was a severe discipline. The laws and usages under which the child of Quirinus lived from his cradle to his grave, were hardly endurable even by those who were inured to them by life-long habit, and he was glad and anxious to escape from them, even with the sacrifice of conscience and self-respect. Every citi-

Its hardships and vexations.

zen, indeed, so far as he was the occupier of Roman or Quiritary soil, which from henceforth comprehended the whole of Italy, enjoyed exemption from the tribute or rent-charge due to the state as the supreme owner of provincial territory. But on the other hand he became liable not only to the military conscriptions, but to the code of civil law, which in many respects, as in regard to family and marriage, to contracts and the transfer of property, was framed in a harsh and formal spirit, revolting to a people trained in a laxer system, or accustomed at least to other ways and notions. Of the laws of the Etruscans and Samnites we know indeed nothing: possibly they were not less severe and stringent than those of Rome; but these nations had at least grown up under them, and their prejudices now rebelled against the artificial customs of the city on the Tiber, which none but Roman patricians could expound to them. The Romans were little disposed to make concessions, and smooth the asperities which repelled their new associates; and accordingly enfranchisement, though ultimately inevitable, was a work of time, and the result of mutual intercourse.

Quiritary proprietorship, embracing exemption from the land-tax reluctantly given by the emperors.

The great experiment of the consolidation of Italy, thus partially successful, was never repeated on a large scale. While the necessities of the state or the interests of party leaders demanded the admission of entire communities to the rights of intermarriage and commerce, with eligibility to the suffrage, which were all comprehended in the boon of the Latin franchise, little disposition was shown to bestow on strangers the full privileges of Quiritary proprietorship, which gave not merely the empty title of the suffrage, but the precious immunity from tribute or land-tax. Accordingly, while Pompeius, Cæsar, Augustus and others extended the Latin rights to many provincial communities, they were careful to give the full Roman

qualification to persons only.[1] Of such persons, indeed, large numbers were admitted to citizenship by the emperors. The full rights of Rome were conferred on the Transalpine Gauls by Claudius, and the Latin rights on the Spaniards by Vespasian; but it was with much reserve that any portions of territory beyond Italy were enfranchised, and rendered Italic or Quiritary soil, and thus endowed with a special immunity.[2] Thus the state retained a grasp on the land with its fiscal liabilities, while it reaped a distinct fiscal advantage from every personal enfranchisement.

The legacy duty imposed on personal enfranchisement.

Augustus, as we have seen, had ventured to lay a personal tax on the citizens in the shape of a legacy duty, to counterbalance their immunity from tribute. This tax was no more than a twentieth, and from it direct descendants were exempted. Nevertheless certain peculiarities in Roman society might make such a duty more productive than from modern experience we should expect. The exemptions on the ground of lineal descent would be comparatively few, for the wealthy noble was scandalously averse to the forms of legitimate marriage: it gratified his vanity, moreover, to inscribe on his testament the names of the great people he numbered among his friends. Beset through his declining years by the legacy-hunters, one of the minor pests of the Roman society, he might too often divert his posthumous liberality from

[1] Such was their general practice. No doubt there were exceptions. Dion, in speaking of Cæsar's proceedings, indicates the different kinds and values of his boons: ἔδωκε μὲν χώρια καὶ ἀτέλειαν, πολιτείαν τέ τισι, καὶ ἄλλους ἀποίκους τῶν Ῥωμαίων νομίζεσθαι, xliii. 39. So also in some cases Augustus. Suet. *Oct.* 47.: "Civitates merita erga pop. Rom. allegantes immunitate vel civitate donavit." Vespasian gave the Jus Italicum to Stobi, a town in Macedonia. Plin. *Hist. Nat.* iv. 10. See Spanheim, *Orb. Rom.* p. 153.

[2] The origin of the Jus Italicum is ascribed to Augustus by A. Zumpt, followed by Marquardt (Becker's *Ræm. Alterth.* iii. 1. 264.). He transplanted the citizens displaced by his veterans to the provinces, and there endowed their territories with the immunities of Italy.

his next of kin, or even from his children, if such he had, to mere aliens and strangers. Whatever was the amount of this tax, it had the recommendation of being direct, and easily levied under the strict administration of Roman law; and accordingly the readiness with which the emperors imparted citizenship is explained by their eagerness to grasp this tempting booty. Though strongly opposed, in the first instance, we do not find that the legacy duty caused audible murmurs among the people when they had become accustomed to it. It was counted, however, among Trajan's merits that he relaxed in some degree its stringency. Great numbers had gained their footing as Roman citizens by serving magistracies in the Latin towns; but the Roman rights to which they had attained were still so far incomplete, that they had no power of deriving an untaxed inheritance from their own parents; for their parents still remained under the Latin disabilities. Hence the value of citizenship, thus burdened and circumscribed, was held in question by the Latins.[1] Nerva and Trajan decreed that these *new Citizens*, as they were designated, who thus came, as it was called, *through Latium*, should be put on the same advantageous footing as the old and genuine class. In so doing they made doubtless some sacrifice, though not perhaps an important one, of revenue. The merit of the emperor, however, was esteemed so much the greater, inasmuch as the legacy-duty was

[1] Plin. *Paneg.* 37. Comp. Spanheim, *Orb. Rom.* p. 159.: "Adeo ut non haberent ii jura cognationis, nisi rescriptis ad eam rem a principe seorsim acceptis; sed quando filius succedebat patri, succedebat tanquam extraneus hæres, soluta hæreditatis vicesima. Nerva, amplificato eo jure, matrem in liberorum hæreditate, et vicissim liberos ac filium in parentis bonis ea immunitate perfrui voluit. Trajanus vero id beneficium in tantum auxit ut sicut patris filius, ita in filii hæreditate pater immunis esset: tum ut frater, avus, avia, neptis, nepos, et invicem absque diminutione vicesimæ hæredes esse possent; denique exiles hæreditates ad quoscunque hæredes pertinerent immunes itidem fecit."

paid to the fiscus, and not to the public treasury, and was devoted—such, at least, was the destination assigned it by Augustus—to the maintenance of the imperial armies.

Constant degradation of the character of Roman citizenship in the provinces.

It was the fiscus, as we see, that gained by the succession tax; but at the same time the ærarium lost by the exemption from land-tax conferred upon Italic soil. The area to which this immunity was extended cannot be estimated. It seems, however, to have been confined, beyond the Alps, to specific districts appertaining to the colonies, and possibly in a few cases to municipia, and never to have been communicated to a whole province, or indeed to the lands of mere *peregrini*.[1] The places thus endowed were such only as were inhabited by Romans or Latins, by persons, that is, either possessing the full franchise, or enjoying the capacity of acquiring it. But citizenship in the provinces must have been in a state of constant deterioration; for the genuine Roman could not form a legitimate marriage except with a woman of his own political status; and as these must have been few in the provinces compared with the men, unions of disparagement must have been habitually contracted, the offspring of which could not succeed to all their father's privileges. The population of the colonia must thus have generally become in two or three generations Romans of a degenerate legal type; though they seem to have still retained, by some unexplained fiction, the name of citizens, and to have enjoyed some conventional superiority over the *peregrini*.

Accordingly, while the Italic exemption was imparted to none who were not already citizens, and therefore liable, for the most part, to the tax on suc-

[1] A few municipia in Spain and elsewhere may probably be enumerated among the civitatis juris Italici. Spanheim, *Orb. Rom.* p. 151. 153.

cession, the citizenship with its attendant taxability was bestowed on many who enjoyed no Italic exemption to set off against it. It became the obvious interest of the government to extend the one, and to limit the other. The earlier emperors had, indeed, exercised a jealous reserve in popularizing the Roman privileges; but from Claudius downwards they seem to have vied with one another in the facility with which they conferred them as a boon, or imposed them as a burden.[1] The burden indeed might be but trifling. Direct succession was exempt from the duty, the smallest successions were relieved from it, and the chance of an ample legacy from a stranger might hardly enter into the calculations of the candidates for citizenship. But, on the other hand, we can hardly comprehend in what the boon could generally consist, except to persons resident in or near to Rome, who might hope to share in the honours and offices, the distributions and largesses, reserved for Roman citizens. When Pliny is reduced to specify respect or love for the commonwealth as the ruling motive of such applications, he would seem to be really screening from view some baser or more worldly inducement.[2] We must presume that the resident in provinces acquired by citizenship some superiority over his fellow-countrymen. But, however this may be, great anxiety seems to have been felt among large classes to obtain enrolment in the ranks of Rome.

Gradual extension of citizenship to all the free population of the empire.

[1] The practice of purchasing Civitas was undoubtedly common under Claudius, and the price was at first high; but afterwards the emperor's freedmen sold it for a trifle to stimulate the demand. Dion, lx. 17. Galba made a great favour of bestowing it. Otho lavished it on the whole nation of the Lingones. Suet. *Galb.* 8.; Tac. *Hist.* i. 78.

[2] Plin. *Paneg.* 37.: "Inveniebantur tamen quibus tantus amor nominis nostri inesset, ut Romanam civitatem non vicesimæ modo sed etiam affinitatis damno bene compensatam putarent; sed iis maxime debebat gratuito contingere a quibus tam magno æstimabatur."

The solicitations of Pliny to Trajan in the interest of his personal friends and clients, represent doubtless the pressure which was actually exerted on the emperor from every side.[1] Hadrian was besieged as closely and as constantly as his predecessor. The benefactions of this prince to the provinces are signalized in general terms by Dion; and Spartian assures us that he conferred the Latin right on several communities, while he remitted tribute to others; an indulgence which may perhaps imply the concession of the Jus Italicum.[2] Antoninus Pius is also celebrated on medals as a *Multiplier of citizens*[3]; but neither Hadrian, as hastily affirmed by St. Chrysostom, nor his next successor, as has been inferred from a confusion of names, was the author of the decree by which the Roman franchise was finally communicated to all the subjects of the empire.[4] Whatever the progress of enfranchisement may have been, this famous consummation was not effected till fifty years after our present date, by the act of Antoninus Caracalla.[5]

Decree of Antoninus Caracalla.

This gradual approximation of the free races of the empire to a common status was the most marked symptom of progress towards unity. The advances Hadrian made to his subjects by rendering himself accessible to them at their own

Progress of the empire towards uniformity.

[1] Plin. *Epist.* x. 4. and 8. The writer solicits Civitas for his physician Harpocras, an Egyptian. I presume that had this man been resident at Rome, he would have obtained the franchise under the ancient decree of Julius Cæsar, by which the professors of his and other sciences were thus favoured. Suet. *Jul.* 42.

[2] Dion, lxix. 5. Spartian, *Hadr.* 21.

[3] Spanheim, *Orbis Rom.* p. 169., refers to a medal of Antoninus in Goltz's *Thesaurus,* with the legend "ampliatori civium," and to an inscription, Gruter, ccccviii. 1.

[4] S. Chrysost. in *Act. Apost.* xxv.: ἀπὸ Ἀδριανοῦ φασὶ πάντας εἶναι Ῥωμαιοὺς· τὸ γὰρ πάλαιον οὐχ οὕτως. See Spanheim, *Orb. Rom.* p. 162.

[5] Dion, lxxvii. 9.; *Digest.* i. 5, "de Statu Hominum," § 17.; Spanheim, *Orbis Rom.* p. 196. The reign of Caracalla dates 211–217 The object of the constitution, it is agreed, was simply fiscal.

doors, were answered by a corresponding advance on their part, in the willingness with which they accepted proffers of citizenship, notwithstanding the drawbacks attaching to it. The requirements of the treasury were now working in the same direction in other quarters, to enforce the principles of administrative uniformity. The distinction between the Imperial and Senatorial provinces was still formally maintained; but the emperors assumed more direct power over the provinces of the senate, with a view to assimilate legal procedure and taxation generally throughout the empire. While several communities were still suffered to retain the boon of autonomy, the choice of their own magistrates and the use of their own internal regulations, the privilege, not less dear to freemen, of self-taxation was, perhaps, wholly withdrawn from them. The new name, which we may render by *controller*, of the officer now appointed by the emperor to overrule such local administrations, seems to imply new functions, and these undoubtedly related to the levy of tolls and contributions.[1]

The civil law of Rome failed of application to questions between foreigners.

With the assimilation of the subject's fiscal burdens kept pace the assimilation of the law and procedure by which he was protected or coerced. The civil laws of Rome, like her political institutions, had grown up with the commonwealth itself, and applied from the first in strictness to the mutual relations of citizens only. The laws of the Twelve Tables, the written code of

[1] Pliny speaks of an extraordinary commissioner, "legatus Augusti," who was sent "ad ordinandum statum liberarum civitatum." *Epist.* viii. 24. Comp. Pliny's own position at Apamea, x. 92. Under Hadrian Claudius Herodes was *διορθωτὴς*, "controller," of the free states of Attica. Philostr. *Vit. Sophist.* i. 256. The same officer seems to bear elsewhere the title of *λογιστὴς*, "accountant;" and from this designation we should infer that his functions were chiefly fiscal. See Becker's *Alterthümer* (Marquardt), iii. 1. 67.

the Republic, defined the rights of the Quirites, the obligations of Quiritary property, and the mode of litigation in regard to them. The *Replies* of the learned patricians, who devoted themselves to expounding the law to their plebeian clients, referred to the interpretation of principles curtly set forth in the written code, and their application to the suits of Romans against Romans; but they must have been soon extended to the solution of questions arising out of the dealings of citizens with sojourners, and even of sojourners with one another. As regarded the tenure of property and modes of succession, the rules of Quiritary possession were clearly inapplicable to provincial estates, and on these subjects, as well as some others, the common sense of the jurisconsults was directed to modifying Roman principles, and gradually ventilating more general methods, under the title of the *Jus Gentium* or Law Universal. Thus for instance the *Patria Potestas*, or rights of fathers over their children, was specially confined to full citizens. The Roman jurists boasted that in no other community were such excessive powers granted to the father as in theirs; but they did not attempt to extend these powers to their subjects. When therefore, at Rome or in the provinces, questions of parental right in the case of foreigners came before them, they were reduced to look for some other rule of decision either in the recognised law of the applicant's own country, or in default of this, in such a law as they could themselves invent and apply in accordance with their own sense of simple justice.

Anomalous relations of the Jus Civile and the Jus Gentium in the Flavian era.

When, however, all Italy became Quiritary soil, and the Italians generally had accepted the status of Roman citizens, fewer cases of conflicting principle would occur in the courts of the city prætor, and there might have been no incongruity in enforcing there the civil law in all its strictness. But, in fact, the ideas of the

Romans had mellowed with their fortunes, and they had become anxious to soften the harshest features, and expand the narrowest views of their law, after coming in contact with the riper and milder notions of Greeks and Asiatics. Slow and obscure was the process by which the stiff lines of the Decemviral code were rounded into the flowing lineaments of Justinian's institutes. On the progress which had been made in this direction in the last age of the republic, when the status of citizen and subject was still strongly defined and contrasted, much light is thrown in the writings of Cicero; but three centuries pass before the sun again rises in the Institutes of Gaius, and then the distinction of citizen and subject has become nearly obliterated.[1] At the period we are now considering, the two conditions were dissolving into one another; but what were the relations of the law of the Roman and the law of the foreigner, or what the character and application of the *Jus Gentium*, or universal law, which seems to have moderated between them, we can but faintly conjecture.[2]

The Jus Honorarium and Perpetual Edict of the prætor.

The great instrument by which the assimilation of law was conducted was the *Jus Honorarium*, or official Edict of the chief judicial magistrates of Rome.[3] Year by year the prætors and ædiles, on commencing their term of office, published the formula by which they

[1] Gaius, however, still retains the formal distinction of cives Romani, Latini and Dediticii. *Instit.* i. 3.

[2] The distinction between the Jus Civile and Jus Gentium is stated by Gaius near the beginning of the third century. *Instit.* i. 1. 1. (cited in the *Digest.* i. 1. 9.): "Omnes populi qui legibus et moribus reguntur, partim suo proprio partim communi omnium hominum jure utuntur. Nam quod quisque populus ipse sibi jus constituit, id ipsius proprium est, vocaturque jus civile, quasi jus proprium ipsius civitatis: quod vero naturalis ratio inter omnes homines constituit, id apud omnes populos peræque custoditur, vocaturque jus gentium, quasi quo jure omnes gentes utuntur. Populus itaque Rom. partim suo proprio, partim communi omnium hominum jure utitur."

[3] *Digest.* i. 1. 7. from Papinian: "Jus prætorium est quod prætores

proposed to regulate their administration of justice. This edict, originally inscribed on a whitened tablet, and suspended in a public place, must have been, in the first instance, a short and simple document, setting forth the recognised sources of the written, with some leading principles of unwritten law and procedure. We may suppose that in later times, when the accumulation of laws, decisions and interpretations, had become excessive, the edict directed the reader to the accredited legal experts whom the judge professed to adopt as his guides. In the existing conflict of law and usage, the litigant would require direction as to the course the bench proposed to follow, and the bench would be glad to shelter itself under established precedents and authorities.[1] While in the city two prætors dispensed the law, the one to the citizens, the other to foreign residents, the prefect in the provinces administered justice to both classes, and hence the Provincial Edict which he promulgated was founded from an early date on a fusion of Roman and foreign principles. We may suppose, indeed, that in the refined communities of the East, familiar with the philosophy of jurisprudence, the prefect allowed full weight to the local law, and subjected his own notions, derived from the Roman forum, to considerable

The provincial edict of the prefects.

introduxerunt, adjuvandi vel supplendi vel corrigendi juris civilis gratia, propter utilitatem publicam; quod et honorarium dicitur, ad honorem prætorum sic nominatum." Comp. *Dig.* i. i. 2, 10.

[1] The Edict was called "perpetuum," as destined to be in force through the prætor's year of office. Dion, xxxvi. 23.; Heinecc. *Antiqu. Rom. Jurispr.* i. 2. 23. Under Hadrian Salvius Julianus is specified as having compiled (composuit) a "perpetual edict." Eutrop. viii. 9. This compilation is referred to by Justinian, and seems to have been sometimes known as the "Edict of Hadrian." The nature of this edict is open to question; there seems, however, no reason to suppose that it constituted a complete or permanent code; nor has Hadrian any claim to be regarded as a great Roman legislator. Hugo, *Hist. Droit. Rom.* § 311. I refer to the French translation.

modification. Among the ruder populations of the West, however, there would be less occasion for such accommodation, and the magistrate would inflict Quiritary law on the Gauls and Britons in almost all its stringency. In either case the provincial edict would refer, perhaps, solely to the cases which came under the cognisance of the prefect himself.[1]

Methods and principles of procedure in the provinces.

This high officer belonged to the class of Roman nobility, of which every member was supposed to be generally acquainted with legal principles, though he might in few instances have acquired a special legal education. He came to his important post with a multiplicity of functions to perform, and with little or no practical experience of the law which he was required to administer. Under these circumstances he was not expected to act wholly for himself. The prefect having set forth his programme, with the aid, doubtless, of professional advisers, summoned learned assessors to his aid, or appointed judges in each particular case before him. To facilitate the ends of justice, he made a circuit through the chief towns of his province, assembling in each the conventus of the district, and selecting from among the delegates persons whom he deemed fit to hear causes in his name. These select judges were not permitted to decline the office; and indeed it was chiefly in order to supply the prefect with such assistance, that the conventus was summoned. It appears also that these judges were chosen from Roman citizens or from provincials according as the suitors desired to be ruled by Roman law, or by the special customs of their own province. In important cases the prefect might refer his suitors to the emperor at Rome; and

[1] See Pliny's letter (*Epist.* x. 74.), where he consults Trajan on a point regarding which he finds that there exists no general law for the empire, nor one for his own province. Trajan makes a special decree for the occasion.

he was assisted by several deputies or substitutes, to whom, at least in private cases, he might remit his jurisdiction; and these deputies also, being often untrained in legal science, obtained the aid of professional assessors.[1]

Relations of Roman and native usage.

The jurisdiction of the prefect extended to criminal as well as civil causes. The trial was conducted publicly in the forum of the provincial capital. The judges, who sat by the prefect's side, were chosen from the ranks of the provincials, and these gave to the accused the benefit in some degree of judgment by his own countrymen. There seems to be no mention in the Codes of any courts of first instance but such as were commissioned by the prefect: we can hardly doubt, however, that the police of the villages, the adjudication of small debts and other cases of petty wrong, must have been left to the summary jurisdiction of native authorities, at least in the remoter districts. Beneath the action of Roman courts and procedure there must have long existed a native law and native usage, which only gradually gave way to the extension of Roman machinery.[2] It must be remembered that our existing

[1] Sigonius, *de Jure Provinc.* ii. in Græv. *Thesaur.* tom. ii. The great source of our knowledge of these matters in the pre-imperial period is the Verrine orations. I cannot quit this subject without acknowledging the advantage I have derived from Mr. Maine's interesting volume on "Ancient Law," and still more, perhaps, from personal intercourse with him.

[2] The administration of law in the Roman provinces has been well illustrated from that in British India in some papers in the *Bombay Quarterly Mag.* 1853, attributed to Sir Erskine Perry. Our provinces have been divided into two classes, the Regulation and the Non-Regulation. The latter class comprises generally the latest acquisitions, in which there has been less opportunity for amending the native organization according to British ideas. Here, as under the Roman system, the judicial and executive functions are lodged for the most part in the same hands, subject to the general control of the central government. The judges are not lawyers by profession. They have been trained as fiscal or military officers, and when deputed to sit on the tribunals, they require the aid of assessors, mostly

documents inform us only of the state of the civil law after the whole empire had been reduced to a homogeneous mass: it may be presumed, however, that the principles of uniformity had gained no such ascendancy in the period which we are now considering. Among the various races which obeyed the imperial sword, various in temper as well as in condition, we may suppose that these principles were variously appreciated; that the Gauls and Germans advanced in them more dubiously and slowly than the Greeks and Asiatics. The intervention of technical forms, and of the class of agents appropriate to them, was resented as a grievance by the subjects of Varus; just as in many parts of India, at this day, the character of judge and ruler is held to be identical, and any attempt to separate their functions is dis-

natives, whom, however, they have full authority to overrule. This, it is said, is the system, rude and wrongful as it seems to us, which most recommends itself to the native mind, accustomed as it is to bow to power, and insensible to the principles of scientific jurisprudence. But since attention at home has been called to the duties of a conquering race, we have felt our obligation to give our subjects a better system than their own, and raise their intelligence to appreciate it. Accordingly, the greater part of our possessions have been put "for the last sixty or seventy years" under Regulation. The judicial and executive are completely separated. The judges of the Supreme Court are sent out from England, appointed by the Crown, and sit as a court of appeal in the capitals of the Presidencies; beneath them are a distinct class of English judges, dispersed throughout the country stations, trained by practice if not by technical education, to administer an imperfect code of native law, tempered by English principles, and the application of their own good sense; and finally there is a large establishment of native officers, who dispense justice in the native fashion, after the native laws and customs, subject only to appeals to the European courts above them. This system, however, as described ten years ago, is undergoing constant modification, and the impending promulgation of a Code, applying to both natives and Europeans, will complete the analogy between our judicial organization and that of the provinces of the Lower Empire; except that the emperors seem to the last to have withheld from their subjects the boon, indispensable we should deem it, of a Supreme Court independent of the resident executive, and responsible to the sovereign only.

tasteful and liable to misconstruction. The education of the world in the principles of a sound jurisprudence was the most wonderful work of the Roman conquerors. It was complete; it was universal; and in permanence it has far outlasted, at least in its distant results, the duration of the empire itself.

Decline of public spirit coincident with the perfection of jurisprudence.

But, unfortunately, education in jurisprudence is not education in freedom; generally speaking it is much the reverse. The most comprehensive, exact, and logical codes, from Justinian downwards, have been the actual badges of national servitude and degradation. The disgust of the Germans at the niceties of Roman law and procedure was the instinct of freemen, looking to broad practical results, and despising the intellectual attractions of form and harmony. The development of an exact and philosophical jurisprudence in the empire kept pace with the decline of public spirit, and the decay of self-respect and self-assertion. The body-politic became an admirable machine, but life and soul were wanting to it. Such was the languor that was stealing over Roman society at the period of its greatest brilliancy, and its highest culture. Such was the stagnation which, in spite of material and even moral improvement on all sides; in spite of culminating science, of wide-spread art, of milder manners and expanding humanity; in spite even of spiritual yearning, was beginning to paralyse the Roman world in the age of the Antonines. The channel, indeed, sloped so gradually, that the direction of the current was hardly perceptible so long as nothing occurred to break and agitate it. But its downward course was made fully apparent on the first political catastrophe. The disasters of the reign of Aurelius, to be presently related, revealed to all observers the weakness of the empire, and showed but too plainly that it possessed no vital power of rebound and recovery.

Meanwhile even the outward uniformity impressed on the Roman world had no effect in creating a nation. The portions of the mighty structure have been compared to mosaic work. Each province, each district, almost every town was distinct from all the rest, and at first not only distinct but different, like the several pieces of a variegated tessellation, such as adorned the palace of a prince or senator.[1] Ultimately they were reduced to a single type; they were all of one shape, size and colour, like the flooring of a plebeian cottage; but still they remained separate and distinct one from another. There was uniformity without amalgamation. In an earlier chapter I have shown how the various districts of each province were purposely estranged and kept apart; how the system of local organization worked in making each dependent upon Rome, but all mutually independent. Hence the mass of the emperor's subjects could form no political body to act spontaneously for his interests. They were moved as counters by the hands of a central government, and employed, often blindly and ignorantly, for the creation, or at least for the extortion of material wealth. The producers of the empire were subjected to the control and fiscal manipulation of Roman officials, and these officials were still, as in earlier times, the magnates of the capital, the knights, the nobles, and especially the senators of Rome.

Uniformity without amalgamation.

III. The position of the nobility and the senate has been reviewed more than once in this work, at several crises of our history. Let us once more turn our eyes upon it, as it stood in the age of the Flavians and the Antonines, under the fostering care of its imperial patrons. If Vespasian, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus are the most virtuous, the most able, the most successful of the

3. The senate and nobility.

[1] Dubois-Guchan, *Tacite et son Siècle*, i. 567.

Cæsars, the secret, as our authorities insinuate, of their eminence lay in the favour in which they held the most august order of the citizens. It is by senators, or by the clients of senators, that our history has been entirely written; it will be interesting to examine what was the real amount of the influence or power thus conferred upon the body which has so warmly acknowledged it.

Circumstances which gave a show of importance to the senate.

The old traditions of the free state, which confined to senators the curule and other high magistracies, were still religiously maintained. It was only to the new classes of office, directly attached to the imperial service, such as the prefecture of the city, and command in the prætorium or the palace, that knights and inferior citizens could be appointed. These posts were indeed lucrative and important, and the nobles deeply grudged the good fortune of the upstarts who obtained them; but they were regarded as emanating from the prince's mere caprice, as pertaining to his personal affairs, as touching closely upon menial service, and the magnates could pretend at least to despise them. The consuls indeed were themselves nominated directly by the emperor[1]: but the consulship was still illustrious for its name and traditions, and not only the consulship which gave name to the year, but the supplemental and honorary distinction which bore the name only, continued to be an object of the highest ambition.[2] Even the empty badge of the

Dignity of the consulship. Inferior magistrates elected by the senate.

[1] Trajan, indeed, is said to have remitted these elections to the senate. Plin. *Paneg.* 65.: "Consules fecit quos vos elegeratis."

[2] The substitution of consuls for a part of the year was an irregularity introduced by the first Cæsar. Augustus adopted and systematized it. It seems that down to the time of Vespasian the term of office was ordinarily six months. From Vespasian to Hadrian it was reduced to four months, and the Antonines limited it to three. This rule is said to have been ascertained by Borghesi, the great epigraphist of San Marino, lately deceased. See Noël des Vergers, *Essai sur M. Aurèle*, p. 36.

consular ornaments, now lavishly bestowed, was prized and sought for. The prætors, ædiles and quæstors enjoyed a show at least of free election by the senate; and this distinction may have tended to enhance their credit. The enactments regarding the mode of voting at these elections, at one time open, at another secret, show that some real importance attached to them.[1] At the beginning of Trajan's reign the practice of open suffrage was in use. Old men in Pliny's time remembered the gravity with which this dignified procedure had been invested, and their testimony, we must suppose, referred to the practice under Claudius or Nero. Each candidate was required to declare the grounds of his pretensions in the face of the senate. He recounted his life and actions, his offices and his honours; his friends were summoned to attest his merits. They spoke briefly, and the fathers listened with censorial gravity. But in later times this usage had degenerated into a contest of loudness, vehemence and impudence; the claimants trusted more to entreaties than to merit, more doubtless to bribery than to either. Trajan enacted laws to check bribery[2]; but the senate, impatient at the confusion which prevailed in its elections, insisted with one voice on striking at the root of these evils by resorting to the secret ballot, which was recommended by the usage of the republic, and had found patrons among the highest authorities of the free state.[3] Amid the fierce selfishness, however, of the falling Republic, the ballot had been found intolerable; in the feebler corruption of the Empire some of its minor inconveniences soon called for

[1] Plin. *Epist.* iii. 20., iv. 25. [2] Plin. *Epist.* vi. 19.

[3] Cicero, in the speech *de Leg. Agrar.* i. 2., had called the ballot, "vindex tacitæ libertatis." This was the sentiment he thought fit to express on a popular occasion; but his philosophical view of the subject was different. See *de Legg.* iii. 6.: "Tabella vitiosum occultabat suffragium."

reprehension. Pliny, who had been among the first to invoke it, was no less prompt to complain of it. The electors inscribed trifling and even ribald jokes on their ballots. The insulted senators had no remedy but to solicit *the prince's anger* against the unknown delinquents. But probably, Pliny adds, the delinquents themselves were among the loudest in pretending indignation. *What can you expect in private life from one who will act so scandalously in a grave matter; who will dare to joke and banter in the senate? The bad man cares not what he does, for,* Who will know it? *He asks for his ticket, he takes his stylus, he puts down his head, he cares for no man, he has no respect for himself. . . . . Our vices are too potent for our remedies.*[1] This vehemence is indeed somewhat beyond the occasion, and seems to reflect on the political capacity of the writer who allows himself to indulge in it. The interest of the account lies chiefly in the view it gives us of the importance still attached to the appointment to senatorial offices.

Government of the provinces by senators.

Yet the consulship was in fact a mere pageant: the prætors and ædiles were simply the ministers of the imperial legislation. But the Augustan division of the provinces between the emperor and the senate still existed. The assignment of the various prefectures was almost the same as that established by the founder of the empire. The senate still governed the interior provinces by proconsuls chosen from its own order. Each of these magistrates was endowed with a competent salary, and extensive patronage, which he distributed among the friends of his own colleagues. These advantages were indeed enjoyed in subjection to the caprice of the emperor, who often interfered to annul the senatorial appointment, to retain a favourite at his post

[1] Plin. *Epist.* iv. 25

beyond the legitimate period, or events assume for a time the government of the province itself. Nor were the chiefs of the state unwilling to listen to complaints against the senatorial officers. The oppressed might submit their wrongs to the very body from which their oppressors had been selected, and the senate was compelled to hearken to them, and even to assign them the advocates whom they demanded.[1] The Roman people, in the person of their imperial tribune, presided at the trial of extortionate proconsuls, and listened with favour to declamations fashioned on the model of the Verrine orations. Pliny speaks with complacency of his engagement to the provincials of Africa and Bætica, to prosecute the governors from whose tyranny they had suffered, and he quickened the justice of the senatorial tribunal by statements of the violence practised upon Roman citizens. Cæcilius, a consular, one of the delinquents, withdrew himself from judgment by suicide, and Marius Priscus was sentenced to fine and banishment.[2] The fathers were not suffered to regard themselves as above the law; nor do they seem to have unduly resented the vigour with which even their patrons among the emperors brought the most criminal among them to the bar of public opinion.

Notwithstanding its manifest weakness, however, the senate, dazzled by the splendour of its reputed

[1] Plin. *Epist.* ii. 11., iv. 4., x. 10. Pliny and Tacitus were appointed (jussi) to plead for the Africans, by a senatus-consultum. The trial of Marius took place A. D. 100, at the beginning of Trajan's reign. Pliny accused Bæbius Massa in 93, under Domitian. Tac. *Agric.* 45. On other occasions he appeared for the defence, as in the case of Julius Bassus and Varenus. *Epist.* vi. 29.

[2] Plin. *ll. cc.* Juvenal, i. 47., viii. 25. 120., who, however, insinuates that the victims of these energetic proceedings, like Milo at Massilia, had little reason to bewail their sufferings: "Exul ab octava Marius bibit; et fruitur Dis Iratis; at tu, victrix provincia, ploras." Juvenal seems also to indicate the frequency of such accusations at this period; but the names of Pansa and Natta, which he introduces, are supposed to be fictitious.

dignity, continued to cherish the traditions of its ancient power. The feeling which animated it has been preserved in the most glowing pages of the most eloquent of the Romans; the national imagination, which elsewhere displays itself in various forms of poetical invention, seems at Rome to have brooded on the past glories of the great national council. The senate, in its culminating period, had been an oligarchy of which all the members were equal. The action of each was subjected to conventional rules. Every step, tone, or look in the assembly was governed by the usage of centuries, and by prejudices founded in the national veneration for antiquity. The conscript fathers were trained like soldiers to obey the word of command delivered by their officers in the tone of persuasion, and they moved from one side of the curia to the other, cheered or voted, in deference to signs understood among them, with a precision which might be envied by the tacticians of a British parliament. The chiefs of factions had well-defined positions; the prince, the consuls, the tribunes, the consulars all exercised a direct sway within their own sphere, more like the authority of colonels or centurions, than the precarious influence of our greatest party leaders. Hence the senate, whatever personal independence its members might claim, had long been subjected, as a body, to almost despotic command. In tranquil times, when the supremacy of the nobles was uncontested, it might respect as its patron a Scipio or a Catulus; but in periods of excitement, when its prerogatives were assailed, when the knights were demanding a share in its monopolies, or the provincials clamouring for equal justice, a Sulla or Pompeius was the champion to whom it turned, and it was troubled by no apprehension of the sword under which it placed itself. It might have shrunk indeed from the prospect of this armed sway being indefi-

The pride of the senate maintained by its usages and traditions.

nitely prolonged; but Sulla had voluntarily abdicated, Pompeius had consented to exchange his authority in the city for empire in the provinces; the fortune of the republic, or its own, possibly in the last resort the daggers of tyrannicides might abridge the date of too protracted a sovereignty.

Such was the senatorial theory of constitutional government; as such it was understood by Lucan and Tacitus. They asked only, did the existing imperial system correspond with the spirit of this theory? was the emperor a prince or a tyrant; the elect of the senate, or a military usurper? Was he the champion of the nobles in the face of the legions, the people and the provinces; or was he a mere selfish upstart, using all classes for his own greed or ambition? In descent, in character, in person, did his pre-eminence betoken the choice and favour of the gods? If such were his claims, the usage of a century and a half might reconcile the sturdiest republicans to the principle of a life-tenure. Augustus had humoured their scruples by the show of periodical resignation and re-appointment; but this farce was not repeated by his successors; from Vespasian to Antoninus the best and most honoured of the Cæsars pretended to no such overstrained moderation.[1] Though the chiefs of the state still retained the tribunitian power, and counted the years of their reign from the day that they acquired it, the functions it symbolized had lost in the second century all political meaning. The struggle between Rome and Italy, between Italy and the provinces, between the senators and the knights, the struggle for the Judicia and the emoluments of office abroad, had all passed away. The senate re-

The senate triumphs over the freedmen.

[1] The emperors who reigned long enough continued to celebrate "Decennalia," and to strike medals, on the conclusion of each tenth year of their principate. Thus we have coins of Antoninus Pius with the legend, "primi decennales;" others with, "vot. sol. decenn. ii."

tained indeed, as we have seen, some political advantages; but it was a senate so often renewed by fresh infusions, so freely percolated by the blood of the lower classes, that the old jealousies had lost their force, and the feuds of the republic had been pacified. Against one class only of their fellow-subjects, the freedmen, especially those of the imperial household, did the senate cherish a grudge; a class small in number, but formidable from its wealth, from its favour with their common master, from its opportunities of intruding into places of trust and power. Against this class it still held a hostile attitude; it assailed it with ridicule, with defiance, with appeals to the prejudices of the people and the fears of the prince; and when it gained at last the prince's ear, there was no claim it so strongly urged as that his freedmen should be discountenanced and their influence abated. This was the single triumph which the senate obtained from Vespasian and Trajan; and for this it lavished on them its loudest praises, and vowed that the days of equality and liberty had once more returned. The secular contest of the Patres and the Plebs, of the Optimates and the Tribunes, finally died away in the disgrace of a score or two of upstart foreigners.[1]

The nobles favour the emperors who provide them with conquests and plunder.

Nor must we overlook the merit of the Flavian Cæsars, and especially of Trajan, in the eyes of the senators, as revivers of the old traditions of conquest. The Romans as a nation had gloried in victories and triumphs; but the nobles had lived upon them. The wealth and consideration of the old historic houses

[1] Hadrian was the first, if we except the momentary innovation of Vitellius (Suet. in *Vitell.*), to employ Roman knights in his private service in the place of freedmen; Spartian, *Hadr.* 22.; and this practice was gradually formed into a system, and remained in use beyond the time of Constantine. Victor, *Epit.* 14.: "Officia sane publica et palatina, nec non militiæ, in eam formam statuit, quæ paucis a Constantino immutatis hodie perseverant."

had depended on their opportunities of command, of plunder, of administrative office. The peace of the empire had reduced the nobles in this respect to the level of private citizens. Hence their deep disgust at the imperial system. They were never tired, never ashamed of flouting the weakness and cowardice of the princes who refused to launch them against the foreigner on the frontier. Vespasian earned their sympathy by his warlike career before he sheathed his sword; and his closing the temple of Janus betokened the cessation of civil rather than of foreign warfare. The extension of the empire in Britain was continued throughout his reign. Domitian added a new province beyond the Solway, and attempted at least to acquire fresh territories on the Danube. The acquisitions of Trajan exalted him in the eyes of his senatorial flatterers to the rank of a Pompeius or a Cæsar. But the old policy of the republic, the policy of the senate in its era of ascendancy, then revived for a season, could not be perpetuated. Hadrian found it necessary, like Augustus, to draw in his outposts, and Hadrian, like Augustus in his latter years, or like Tiberius the imitator of Augustus, became an object of pique and discontent to the senators, and suffered in character from their unscrupulous animosity. These passions were at last calmed down in the languid trance of the reign of Antoninus.

The council or cabinet of the emperor: the Consistorium and Auditorium.

The emperor's freedmen had been special objects of jealousy because they intercepted the influence in his counsels which the senate claimed for its own. Augustus had instituted a council or cabinet of fifteen, comprising the consuls and chief functionaries, with whom he prepared his measures, and to whom he partly opened the secrets of his policy. Under the Claudii this intimacy had been doubtless obstructed

by the personal interest of Sejanus and Macro, of Pallas and Narcissus. But under Domitian, who amidst all his vices retained at least no favourite and kept his freedmen in check, the council recovered some portion of its authority: even the burlesque debate of the turbot shows that functions which could be so caricatured were not wholly in abeyance. This council or Consistorium, as it came to be designated, continued to gain in dignity; while other advisers, taken also from the highest nobility, formed, under the name of the Auditorium, a bench of assessors in the emperor's court of justice.[1] Bound to their prince by honours and dotations, assured by his solemn promise that he would allow none of their blood to be shed judicially, favoured by his personal intercourse, distinguished not only by their garb and trappings, but by the sounding title of *Clarissimi*, flattered with the declaration made by Hadrian when he introduced into their order his prætorian prefect, that he could bestow on his choicest friend no higher dignity, the senators did not push their affectation of independence to acts of defiance or rivalry.[2] The

[1] Marquardt points out that knights and others below the rank of senators were admitted into the council, at least in the time of Hadrian, and affirms, but hardly on sufficient grounds, that the council ceased to be an offshoot of the senate. Comp. Spartian, *Hadr.* 22.: "Causas . . . . frequenter audivit, adhibitis consilio consulibus atque prætoribus, *et optimis senatoribus*." c. 8.: "Optimos quosque de senatu in contubernium imperatoriæ majestatis adscivit . . . . erat enim tunc mos ut, quam princeps causas cognosceret *et senatores et equites Rom.* in consilium vocaret." But of these last it is said, c. 18.: "Quos tamen senatus omnis probasset." Passages are cited from Dion, lxxx. 1.; Herodian, vi. 1.; Lamprid. *Alex. Sev.* 15, 16., which show that even at a later period the composition of this cabinet was essentially senatorial.

[2] Spartian, *Hadr.* 8. The members of the Consistorium received salaries amounting apparently to 60,000 or 100,000 sesterces = 480*l.* or 800*l.* Orelli, *Inscript.* 2648., cited by Marquardt (Becker's *Alterth.* iii. 2. 87, note 10.). The term "Clarissimi," as a specific designation of the senators, may have come into use somewhat later; but Pliny (*Epist.* ii. 11., vi. 29. 33., *Paneg.* 90.) qualifies the proceedings of the illustrious order as "claræ," and its dignity as "claritas."

panegyric which Pliny pronounced on Trajan's early promise hazarded the boldest utterances of which they were now capable. On assuming his office as consul suffect in September 100, the orator, according to custom, addressed the prince in a set speech before the fathers. Such harangues had been hitherto confined to the single topic of thanks for the honour to which the speaker had been raised. But Pliny took a higher flight. Trajan had but recently returned from the provinces. His life had been past mostly in the camps; he had hardly yet confronted the august assembly since his election. The object of the speech is apparently to show the entire harmony which exists between the conduct of the new Cæsar and the vows of his senate.[1] Trajan is presumed to enact the part of the perfect ruler. He fulfils every condition which the best of the Romans would require of the chief to whom they pay willing obedience. He was not designated for adoption by Nerva to gratify an empress. He was chosen from among the citizens as the best and worthiest. He who was to rule over all should be selected from the midst of all. Nor though a genuine imperator, was Trajan made emperor by the army. He was chosen by the chosen of the senate, and with the consent of the senate itself. The orator proceeds to set forth the civil merits of his hero: his moderation, in not multiplying his consulships; his just appreciation of desert in bestowing the fasces a third time on the most distinguished of the senators; his noble indignation against the delators; his abolition of the laws of Majesty, his indulgence to the people, his generosity to the senate and nobles. On the first day of

Pliny's panegyric on Trajan.

Extent to which he indulges in freedom of speech.

[1] See the summary of the *Panegyricus* in Gierig's edition, *Disputatio*, p. xviii.; or in the work itself, cc. 1–5., 25–43., 44–46., 81–88, &c. It had not been so formerly: "Oderat quos nos amaremus, sed et nos quos ille." Plin. *Paneg.* 62.

his consulship Trajan had invited the fathers to resume their liberty, to undertake with him the care of the empire, to watch over the public weal, to gird themselves manfully to their task. Such indeed had been the language of other princes also; but none had ventured to take them at their word. It was not so now. *Thee*, says Pliny, *we follow, without fear, without hesitation. Thou commandest us to be free: we will be free. Thou requirest us to express our wishes and opinions: we will express them.*[1] Intoxicated by such condescensions, he allows the senate to assume a tone of independence and almost of condescension also. Though the emperor has stood before the consul seated to take the oath of allegiance to the state; though perfect civil equality has been attained between prince and people; though the magistrates are now free to act as they acted when no emperor existed; though the gods have been solemnly invoked to preserve the chief of the state as long as he is faithful to his duties, and no longer; nevertheless the senate, he protests, will continue to pay honour where honour is due, and will not risk its security by rudely stretching its acknowledged authority.[2] The contrast is amusing between the orator's profession of independence and his anxiety not to offend by it; but the senate supplied the best commentary on its spokesman's language, by its zeal in protecting the person of the emperor, and anticipating his sentence on every conspirator against him.

[1] Plin. *Paneg.* 66.

[2] Plin. *Paneg.* 44. 64. 68. 93. Comp. Dubois-Guchan, *Tacite et son Siècle*, i. 17. The consul, speaking solemnly in the name of the senate, repudiates the use of the term "dominus," as applied to the emperor, *Paneg.* 2., and insists on the proper difference between "dominatio" and "principatus," c. 45. But in his official letters the same writer does not hesitate to address Trajan as "dominus." *Epist.* x. 2. 4, 5, &c. So also in the "D. Hadriani Sententiæ et Epistolæ" (*Corp. Juris. Ante-Justin.* p. 202. ed. Bœcking), the emperor is constantly addressed by petitioners as "dominus imperator."

IV. Nevertheless, the love of raillery and complaining which gained on the Roman character as it lost its self-respect and vigour, might annoy even the most popular princes; and we have seen that both Trajan and Hadrian resided for the most part away from the city, and drew their breath more freely at a distance from the curia. The rival power which balanced the senate, and divided with it their jealous vigilance, was the army. Between these forces a certain antagonism had always existed. When Augustus found himself at the head of forty legions, it was difficult to reassure the council which lay helplessly at his mercy. The establishment of a body-guard, to watch over the prince's safety, and keep peace at the same time in the city, was a concession to these natural apprehensions. The legions were disbanded, or dismissed to the Rhine and Danube, and the prætorians, a small and select brigade, humoured by high pay and many indulgences, took their place under the walls of Rome. The citizen still resumed the toga when he entered the gates, and the armed auxiliary was excluded not from the city only but from the whole of Italy. In the second century the prætorian cohorts were recruited from the peninsula, which thenceforth was exempted from the military conscription. The senate might still flatter itself that this formidable body was unconnected at least with the regular army; that it was no foreign force, like the legions recruited in the remotest provinces, menacing the rights of the citizens, and freedom of debate; but a genuine militia, chosen from the citizens themselves, in whose feelings it participated, and whose privileges it protected sword in hand. The numbers, favour and consideration of the prætorians continued to advance, till the emperors resorted more frequently to the camps, and made themselves more eminently

4. The prætorians and the army.

The prætorian guard originally a protection to the citizens against the legions.

Its decline and fall.

the chiefs of the army. From that time the importance of the city guard declined. Trajan paid little regard to this domestic force, and gave no special confidence to its prefects. At a later period Severus, a champion of the legions, both affronted and chastised it. It was finally abolished at the reconstruction of the empire, and the avowed establishment of military government by Constantine.

The regular army a mercenary body.

The regular army continued to occupy its stations generally in the frontier provinces, where it was retained under the direct control of the emperor. With him rested the appointment of its officers, the distribution of its several corps, and the regulation of its discipline. The transformation of the legions from a national militia to a paid soldiery, though long consummated in fact, had hardly yet been accepted in principle, and the burdens which might be imposed on every citizen on the ground of natural duty, were repudiated by mercenaries who bargained for their services. Hence the soldiers of Tiberius and Trajan chafed under the harsh restraints of the ancient service, and insisted on their pay, their pensions, their privileges, which they regarded as alleviations of servitude. Everywhere the officers connived at a relaxation of their discipline, and the emperors had no harder or more invidious task than to brace it again, when they had become demoralized. It was easier to soothe their murmurs by largesses, and the other *emoluments* of the service, which it was the study of Nero and Domitian to invent.[1] The soldier was withdrawn from the ranks of

Relaxation of discipline.

Emoluments of service.

[1] The "præmia militiæ," besides ornaments and badges, were a pension to veterans, allotments of land, immunity from certain taxes, citizenship in the case of auxiliaries. We possess many specimens of the form of these discharges, or "tabulæ honestæ missionis;" thus, for instance: "Ser. Galba imperator . . . . veteranis qui militaverunt in leg. i. Adjutr. honestam missionem et civitatem dedit." See Marquardt (Becker's *Rœm. Alterth.* iii. 2. 432.).

citizenship, taught to regard himself as a member of a separate commonwealth, and invested with all the outward badges of a distinct and favoured class. He was relieved from the restrictions which retained the son of a Roman family under the legal power of his father, and forbade him to devise property by will. The soldier was specially licensed to hold property and to bequeath it, and unmarried and childless as he was, he might enjoy the satisfaction of being caressed by his own parent for the sake of it.[1] He was removed, moreover, from the jurisdiction of the civil courts; he settled disputes with his comrades before the tribunal of his own officers, and even the civilian whom he had insulted was obliged to appeal against him to the partial ears of the legatus or centurion.[2] The awe in which these privileges caused him to be held by the quailing provincials, was more valuable perhaps than the privileges themselves. He found that if he had bartered away blood and strength, his elevation in social rank had more than repaid him.

Permanence of the constitution of the legion.

It was fitting that the legion, the instrument by which the empire had been acquired, should continue to exist as one of its most permanent and unvaried institutions. The account already given of it under Augustus and Nero applies in almost every particular to the age of Antoninus. Its arms and accoutrements, its tactics and training, its personal composition, remained as of old. The extension of the provinces required some addition to the number of legions, which, accordingly, we find increased from twenty-five to thirty; but the

[1] Comp. *Juv.* xvi. 51.:

"Solis præterea testandi militibus jus Vivo patre datur."

Comp. *Inst.* ii. 12.: "Quod quidem jus initio tantum militantibus datum est tam auctoritate d. Augusti, quam Nervæ, nec non optimi imperatoris Trajani; postea vero subscriptione d. Hadriani etiam dimissis militia, id est veteranis, concessum."

[2] Juvenal, *l. c.*

complement of each, and its due proportion of auxiliaries was unchanged.[1] The rule which required apparently the legatus, or brigadier, to be a senator, while the tribune, or colonel, was sometimes taken from the knights, seems to indicate a concession to the jealousy of the imperial councillors. The most important innovation we discover relates to the system of castrametation, as set forth by Hyginus in the time of Trajan. A comparison of the Polybian and the Hyginian camps shows that the space required by an army at the later era was less than half of that which was allotted at the earlier; and we conclude that the soldiers of the empire chose rather to be crowded into a narrow space than execute the laborious works to which the stricter obedience or hardier sinews of the republican militia submitted.[2]

[1] Marquardt (Becker's *Ræm. Alterth.* iii. 2. 356.) gives a list of the legions from a column preserved in the Vatican Museum of the date of M. Aurelius. See Gruter, 513. 3.; Orelli, 3368., corrected by Borghesi, which it may be well to subjoin.

3 in Britain: ii. Augusta. vi. Victrix. xx. Valeria Victrix.
2 in Germ. sup.: viii. Aug. xxii. Primigenia.
2 in Germ. inf.: i. Minervia. xxx. Ulpia.
3 in Pannon. sup.: i. Adjutrix. x. Gemina. xiv. Gemina.
1 in Pannon. inf.: ii. Adjutrix.
2 in Mœsia sup.: iv. Flavia. vii. Claudia.
4 in Mœsia inf. and Dacia: i. Italica. v. Macedonica. xi. Claudia. xiii. Gemina.
2 in Cappadocia: xii. Fulminata. xv. Apollinaris.
1 in Phœnice: iii. Gallica.
2 in Syria: iv. Scythica. xvi. Flavia.
2 in Judea: vi. Ferrata. x. Fretensis.
1 in Arabia: iii. Cyrenaica.
1 in Africa: iii. Augusta.
1 in Egypt: ii. Trajana.
1 in Hispania: vii. Gemina.
1 in Noricum: ii. Italica.
1 in Rhætia: iii. Italica.

[2] See the two systems explained by General Roy, *Mil. Antiq. in Scotland*, p. 186. It appears that the space required for 19,000 men under the Scipios sufficed to accommodate 50,000 under Trajan. The general characteristic of the Hyginian camp is its oblong shape, the Polybian being properly square. But both Hirtius (*Bell. Alex.*

System of military defence—camps, earthworks, castellated forts, and barbarian mercenaries.

The habit of constructing not fortified camps only, as of old, but long lines of entrenchment for permanent defence, of which we have met with such striking instances, has commonly been branded as a symptom of declining courage. Yet the armies of the republic were trained to wield the spade alternately with the pilum, and seem never to have despised the shelter of the mound and fosse. We may remember the earthworks of Cæsar on the banks of the Rhone, and before the Pompeian camp at Petra; and the fortified lines which traversed the heart of Germany were begun by Drusus and Tiberius. In the defensive positions which the Romans now assumed on their own frontiers, they could not dispense with the protection of strong places, at convenient distances, and their connecting these posts with continuous lines was surely no proof of cowardice. The system, indeed, of frontier defences was now carried out more elaborately. The marches of the empire assumed the character of a military occupation. Their garrisons were permanently established; every camp was converted into a castle, enclosed in embattled walls of stone, and furnished with the ordinary conveniences of civil life. The surrounding tracts were assigned to the veterans, or to bands of warlike barbarians invited from beyond the frontiers. Certain battalions were specially exempted from camp-duty, and lodged as a local militia in the neighbouring districts. Bound to appear in arms at the first summons, they enjoyed the use of cattle, slaves and implements, supplied them by the state.[1] The hiring of barbarian

80.) and Vegetius (i. 23.), at an interval of four centuries, tell us that Roman camps were often circular, semicircular, or triangular, according to the requirements of the ground.

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 54.: "Agros vacuos et militum usui sepositos." The veterans settled on these frontier lands were afterwards called "limitanei milites, ripenses, riparienses." *Codex Theod.* vii. 22. 8.; *Cod. Justin.* xi. 59. 3.

mercenaries, which became daily a more important element in the military policy of the empire, had not been unknown to the republic, and was adopted in turn by every imperator.[1] But undoubtedly the system was carried further under Trajan and his successors than before. Not bands of mercenary warriors only, but tribes and kingdoms were taken into pay. The Marcomanni, the Astingi, the Iazyges learnt, side by side with the Romans, the tactics which they could employ, when occasion served, against them. The cupidity of their chiefs was inflamed by the touch of Roman gold; and thus, step by step, was introduced the unworthy policy, fatal as it finally proved, of paying a disguised tribute as the price not only of active defence, but even of abstinence from attack.

The emperors generally anxious to repress the military spirit of the soldiery.

In their love of gold, the barbarians might vie with their more polished patrons, but they could hardly exceed them. The cupidity of the legions was still, as in the more exciting periods of civil war, the principle to which their leaders could most safely appeal. The plunder of an enemy is sweet to every soldiery; but the Roman retained to the last the national taste for compassing and hoarding petty lucre by thrift and usury, as well as manual labour. The solid coin he received for his military pay was invaluable for investment at a time when even the wealthy lived chiefly on the produce of their farms; and if the

[1] In the course of this history we have remarked on the settlements of Cæsar and Agrippa on the Rhine. So also Tiberius, Dion, liv. 36.; Suet. *Tib.* 9.; Tac. *Ann.* ii. 63. An earlier instance of the kind occurs in Livy, xl. 34. 38. For a later instance, see Vopiscus in *Prob.* 14, 15. M. Antoninus, after succeeding to Pius, made many such settlements in Dacia, Pannonia, Mœsia, and even in Italy. But he desisted from introducing the barbarians within the Alps, in consequence of some disturbances at Ravenna. Dion, lxxi. 11. *καὶ αὐτῶν ἐν Ῥαβέννῃ τινὲς οἰκοῦντες ἐνεωτέρισαν . . . . καὶ διὰ τοῦτ' οὐκέτι ἐς τὴν Ἰταλίαν οὐδένα τῶν βαρβάρων ἐσήγαγεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς προαφιγμένους ἐξῴκισεν.*

means of investment were not at hand, he committed it as a precious deposit to the soil, often not to be brought to light again before the lapse of many centuries. The donatives, given in sums varying from ten to a hundred pounds of our money, required at every accession, and every anniversary of an accession, might be regarded as a regular advance on the soldier's ordinary pay. These sums, large as they were, might be fairly set off against the expense of constant war on the enemy, or the scandal of plunder and free quarters among the provincials. Let us not grudge the Cæsars the credit of maintaining their legionary hordes with so little injury to their subjects, and on the whole with so little aggression on their neighbours. When compelled to wage war beyond the frontiers, they were nervously solicitous that their wars should be brief as well as triumphant. To gratify the restlessness of the soldiers sometimes might be necessary; but it was most important not to excite the ambition of the officers. The imperator, and he alone, though long absent from the camps, must be regarded as the chief of the legions, the source of honour, the patron of desert, the tutelary genius whose auspices led to victory. Hence the custom of requiring the soldiers, through all their ranks, to take the military oath at the commencement of every year. In nothing was the contrast more marked between Trajan and Domitian, than in the temper with which each awaited the announcement that this ceremony had been completed. *To the one,* says Pliny, *the day was happy and serene, which cast over the other a cloud of anxiety. The bad princes full of restless terror, and underrating even the patience of their subjects, looked out on all sides for the messengers of the public servitude. Did rivers, snows or tempests, retard the tidings, straightway they apprehended the worst that they deserved; they feared everybody without distinction; for bad*

princes see their own successors in all who are better than themselves, and therefore they have reason to fear everybody. But Trajan's security was disturbed neither by the delay of his messengers, nor by their tidings. He knows that the oath to him is everywhere being taken, for he too has pledged himself by oath to all the citizens.[1]

The emperors become the champions of the army, and the senate is finally overpowered by the soldiers.

The balance thus adjusted between the senate, the prætorians, and the legions was precarious and temporary. It was in fact a compromise of pretensions and forces which required for its security wisdom and temper in the chief of the state, unreserved surrender of ambition in the nobles, and the continued inactivity of the armies on the frontier. So long indeed as the prince retained his place in the city, the guards who surrounded his person had the power to make or unmake him; but few as they were in number, and subject to his constant care and vigilance, he had, generally, ample means of attaching or controlling them. But circumstances were in progress which compelled him at no distant date to quit the curia and the prætorian camp, and throw himself into the lines of the Rhine and Danube. A preponderating influence was thus given to the army both in the choice of the ruler and the mode of government. The champion of the soldiers became the terror of the senate, which he seldom met but to oppress or chastise it. His own perilous eminence was only retained by pampering the multitude of his masters, either by constant wars, or by plunder and confiscation. Once or twice the senate, maddened by wrongs and insults, ventured to oppose to a baseborn Thracian or Illyrian, invested by the soldiers with the imperial purple, a chief of its own rank and its own appointment; but strength was

[1] Plin. *Paneg.* 68.

wanting to its pretensions, and the elect of the nobles soon fell before the favourite of the army. Had the empire remained unassailed from without, it is possible that, under a succession of prudent princes, the compromise of the Flavian era might have been maintained indefinitely; but its wealth was too tempting, the weakness of its inanimate bulk too apparent; the cupidity and the confidence of the barbarians waxed together; and the great onset they made on it in the latter years of Aurelius, rendered the decline of the constitutional monarchy into a pure military despotism both inevitable and rapid.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

M. Aurelius Antoninus sole emperor.—Association of Verus.—Disturbances abroad and calamities at home.—Verus conducts a war with Parthia.—Joint triumph of the emperors, 166.—Administration of Aurelius at Rome.—Inroads of the Germans, Scythians, and Sarmatians on the northern frontier.—Pestilence spread through the empire by the legions returning from Syria.—The emperors advance to Aquileia, 167.—They cross the Alps, 168.—Return and death of Verus, 169.—Aurelius on the Danube.—His victory over the Quadi, 174.—His domestic troubles.—Unworthiness of his son Commodus.—Licentiousness of his consort Faustina.—Revolt and death of Avidius Cassius, 175.—Aurelius in the East.—He returns to Rome and triumphs over the Sarmatians, 176.—Repairs again to the Danube.—His successes over the barbarians, and death, 180.—Compared with Alfred the Great.

Symptoms of decline of the empire.—1. Contraction of the circulation.—2. Decrease in population.—3. Effects of vice, arising from slavery.—4. Exhaustion of Italian blood, ideas, and principles.—5. Effect of pestilence and natural disturbances.—Revival of superstitious observances and persecution of the Christians.—The "Meditations" of M. Aurelius.—Stoicism.—New Platonism.—Revival of positive belief.—Christianity.—Conclusion. (A.D. 161–180, A.U. 914–933.)

The statue of M. Aurelius on the Campidoglio.

OF all the Cæsars whose names are enshrined in the page of history, or whose features are preserved to us in the repositories of art, one alone seems still to haunt the eternal city in the place and the posture most familiar to him in life. In the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, which crowns the platform of the Campidoglio, imperial Rome lives again.[1] Of all her consecrated

[1] This noble figure of bronze, originally gilded, was extracted from the ruins of the Forum in 1187, and placed before the Lateran palace by Clement III. under the name of Constantine, a misnomer to which it owes perhaps its preservation. In 1533 it was removed to the Capitol, where it now stands. Its base is supposed to have been recently discovered between the arch of Severus and the milliary column. It may have nearly replaced the equestrian statue of Domitian, to which it seems to have borne a resemblance in the attitude of the rider. See vol vii chapter lxii.

sites it is to this that the classical pilgrim should most devoutly repair; this of all the monuments of Roman antiquity most justly challenges his veneration. For in this figure we behold an emperor, of all the line the noblest and the dearest, such as he actually appeared; we realize in one august exemplar the character and image of the rulers of the world. We stand here face to face with a representative of the Scipios and Cæsars, with a model of the heroes of Tacitus and Livy. Our other Romans are effigies of the closet and the museum; this alone is a man of the streets, the forum, and the Capitol. Such special prominence is well reserved, amidst the wreck of ages, for him whom historians combine to honour as the worthiest of the Roman people.

Aurelius generously associates Verus with himself in the empire.

The habits of mind which Aurelius had cultivated during the period of his probation, were little fitted, perhaps, to give him a foresight of the troubles now impending. In presiding on the tribunals, in guiding the deliberations of the senate, in receiving embassies and appointing magistrates, he had shrunk from no fatigue or responsibility; but the distaste he expressed from the first for his political eminence, continued no doubt to the end; his heart was still with his chosen studies, and with the sophists and rhetoricians who aided him in them.[1] Hadrian, in mere gaiety of heart, turned the prince into an academician, but it was with genuine reluctance, and under a strong sense of duty, that Aurelius converted the academician into the prince. But the hope that his peculiar training might render him a model to sovereigns, the recollection of the splendid fallacy of Plato, that states would surely flourish,

[1] Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 5.: "Ubi se comperit ab Hadriano adoptatum, magis est deterritus quam lætatus . . . . cumque ab eo domestici quærerent, cur tristis in adoptionem regiam transiret? disputavit, quæ mala in se contineret imperium."

were but their philosophers princes, or were but their princes philosophers, sustained him in his arduous and unwelcome task, and contributed to his success in it.[1] Though little aware, as yet, of the unparalleled demands which the exigency of public affairs would actually make upon his energies, he showed at the moment of his accession that he had completed a conquest over himself. Although, by Hadrian's express direction, the young Verus had been adopted together with him by Antoninus, their parent had resolved, from the first, to treat them on an unequal footing. He had given his own daughter to Aurelius; he had associated him in the government, and bestowed on him his confidence as his destined successor. To Verus he had shown no such special marks of favour. He had scrutinized the child's character, in which no training availed to correct disorders inherited from a weak and dissolute sire; and even when Verus attained to manhood, Antoninus would not suffer him to participate in the duties of sovereignty. He seems to have placed the youth in no public post whatever; but surely a man so good and just would not thus have slighted his ward, had he not been convinced that his faults were incorrigible.[2] Accordingly, in nominating a successor, he seems to have passed over Verus altogether. But Aurelius had no such confidence in his own superiority. He suffered his affection, at least, to persuade him that he could guide his brother's steps and cover his deficiencies. When the senate hailed him with acclamations as the natural heir and successor to their deceased favourite, he caused all his own

[1] Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 27.: "Sententia Platonis semper in ore fuit: florere civitates, si aut philosophi imperarent, aut imperatores philosopharentur." Comp. Plato, *de Republ.* v. 18., referred to by Cicero, *ad Qu. Fratr.* i. 1. 10. Victor quotes the sentiment as that of the elder Antoninus.

[2] Capitol. *in Ver. Imp.* 3.: "Diu autem et privatus fuit, et ea honorificentia caruit qua Marcus ornabatur."

honours and offices to be communicated to Verus, giving him the title of Augustus as well as of Cæsar; so that now, for the first time, two Augusti sat together in the purple, and the legends of the coinage celebrated their mutual concord or joint liberality.[1] Aurelius henceforth contented himself with the legitimate prerogative of seniority and the natural ascendancy of a nobler and stronger character; nor did Verus, whose slight and perhaps vicious temper was not devoid of affection, unduly resent the superiority thus gently asserted. The elder emperor assumed, indeed, somewhat of the parental relation towards his younger colleague, betrothed to him his daughter Lucilla, and directed him to bear the adoptive names of Lucius Aurelius Antoninus Verus Commodus. After transacting the requisite ceremonies in the senate, both princes repaired together to the prætorian camp, and obtained the sanction of the soldiers to their installation, with a promise of 20,000 sesterces to each of the guards, and a proportionate largess to the legionaries.

This liberal offer was no doubt promptly redeemed. The treasury was full, and at the critical moment of the transfer of power the chief with money in hand commanded all suffrages.[2] Already the emperors were troubled with the report of an insurrection of Iberians in Lusitania, and of an irruption of Moors into Spain.[3] The

Disturbances on the frontiers.

[1] Capitol. *l.c.*: "Sibique consortem fecit, cum illi soli senatus detulisset imperium." Eutrop. viii. 5.: "Tum primum Rom. resp. duobus . . . paruit; cum usque ad eos singulos semper habuisset Augustos."

[2] Eutrop. viii. 8., of the elder Antoninus: "Ærarium opulentum reliquit."

[3] Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 8. The conduct of Priscus, unnoticed by the earlier historians, is recorded from some other sources by Constantine Porphyrogenitus: *ὅτι δ' ἐν Βριταννίᾳ στρατιῶτας Πρίσκον ὑποστράτηγον εἵλοντο αὐτοκράτορα· ὁ δὲ παρῃτήσατο.* Noel des Vergers, *Essai sur M. Aurèle*, p. 29. The successive posts held by Priscus are specified in an inscription found at Rome, which may have been engraved on the base of a statue.

Chatti broke into Gaul and Rhætia, counting, perhaps, on the unsteady attitude of the provincial rulers; and in Britain we are assured that the prefect Statius Priscus was offered the purple by his soldiers, and hardly suffered to decline it.[1] Aurelius, with prudence and moderation, contented himself with recalling his rival, and gave him another command in Syria, where his military talents might be serviceably employed. Calpurnius Agricola, who was sent to replace him, diverted the minds of the legionaries by a well-timed attack on the Caledonians; but his object was perhaps gained when he had led forth his men from their camps, and the total absence of inscriptions of this date on the line of the Antonine wall seems to show that the Roman arms were not now seriously occupied on the frontier of the British province.[2]

Verus assumes the command of the forces in Syria.

The commander of the forces in Syria was always formidable to the emperor at Rome, especially at the moment of a new accession. When we hear that on the death of Antoninus war broke out on the Eastern frontier, we may guess that the new rulers hoped to anticipate revolt by an aggressive movement. But the mutual jealousy of the Romans and Parthians, ever on the watch to baffle each other in the affairs of Armenia, was ready at all times to burst into a flame; and the last thoughts of Antoninus, embittered by the misconduct of his royal clients, may have been clouded with apprehensions of an outbreak in this quarter, as soon as his own firm hand should be withdrawn.[3] There was serious prospect of war in the East. It was

[1] Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 21, 22.

[2] Stuart, *Caledonia Romana;* Noel des Vergers, *Essai sur M. Aurèle*, p. 63. The name of Calpurnius Agricola occurs on the lower wall. Gruter, *Inscript.* 86. 7.; Orell. *Inscript.* iii. 5861.

[3] Thus Capitolinus reports, in apparent contradiction to other statements, that on his death-bed Antoninus "Nihil aliud quam de regibus quibus irascebatur locutus est."

deemed prudent for one at least of the emperors to assume command there in person, and Aurelius deputed to his colleague the care of this enterprise, in which, with chosen generals at his side, he might gain distinctions, while his frivolity and weakness would be removed at least from the gaze of the citizens. Nor, indeed, was the charge Aurelius retained for himself at home lighter or less important.

Reverses of Rome in the East.

Though the eagles had retreated from the Tigris to the Euphrates, the chiefs who had seen how irresistible was their swoop, and how terrible their fury, had not ventured to follow them to their nests, and assail them in their own fastnesses. But the Parthians seized the moment of a change in the succession for a side blow. Another Vologesus, who had had no personal experience of the Roman valour, revived the claims of his nation over Armenia. The legions were summoned to assert the influence of the empire: but the legions were enervated by long peace and luxury; discipline had been shattered; and neither the soldiers nor their officers were fit to contend against a vigorous foe in a difficult country.[1] The Roman arms met with a series of reverses. Their defeat at Elegia was severe enough to recall the disasters of Charræ and the Teutoburg. Severianus, prefect of Cappadocia, deceived by a pretended prophet, was slain, with the total rout of a legion.[2] Meanwhile, Aurelius had accompanied his colleague into Campania, and there bade him speed on his mission to the East; but Verus had loitered on the way, and was still wasting his time at Apulia, while the authority of the empire

[1] Fronto, *Epist.* ii. 193., draws a picture of the degeneracy of the Syrian army.

[2] Lucian, *in Alexandro*, c. 27. The leader of the Parthians is here called Othryades, a mistake for Osroes, or Chosroes. Comp. Lucian, *Quomodo Hist. sit Conscrib.* c. 21. Dion, lxxi. 2., describes the Parthians as the assailants. The Romans were defeated, as of old, by the use of the bow.

was imperilled on the frontiers. Fortunately, Rome still possessed in the East a captain of the ancient stamp. The valour of Avidius Cassius checked the advance of the victors, and turned the tide of victory. The whole force of the empire was placed at once in his hands. Verus reached the province, but took no active part in the campaigns that followed. The peace which he languidly offered was disdainfully refused.[1] While, however, the young prince amused himself at Antioch and Daphne, or fretted at the ribald jokes of the populace, Cassius led his legions once more to the Tigris, took the capitals of the Parthian monarchy, sacked Seleucia, and burnt the royal palace at Ctesiphon.[2] The conquests of Trajan were suddenly recovered; the glory of the Roman arms was vindicated; the confidence of the soldiers was re-established. Statius Priscus, who succeeded to the command in Cappadocia, re-occupied Artaxata. Furius Saturninus, Claudius Fronto, Martius Verus, Julius Marcianus, and Pontius Ælianus, the chiefs of the victorious army, shed a halo of renown over the last splendid successes of the empire.[3]

Succeeded by splendid victories.

Nor did these gallant warriors want for pens to celebrate their exploits. The excitement caused by this sudden revival of the old Roman prowess seems to have kindled the

These actions celebrated in the histories of the time.

[1] Fronto, however, turns this transaction into a subject of panegyric (ii. 341.): "Literas ultro dederat bellum, si vellet, conditionibus poneret. Dum oblatam pacem spernit barbarus, male mulcatus est."

[2] Dion, *l. c.*; Capitol. *Anton. Phil.* 9., *Ver.* 8. Lucian refers to the severity of this contest, and the great battles fought at Europus and Sura, on the Euphrates. Cassius entered Babylon. The names of five legions, and of detachments from various others, which served in this war, may be recovered from medals and inscriptions. Noel des Vergers, *Essai*, p. 57.

[3] These names may be traced in various inscriptions, and also in Lucian's satire. The Chinese writers make mention of a pretended Roman embassy, referred to this period, from a chief designated as Antun (Antoninus). Noel des Vergers, p. 58.

imagination of the men of letters, and transformed the herd of grammarians, anecdotists, and rhetoricians into military historians.[1] All, however, that we know of the composition in which they celebrated the glories of Verus and Cassius, is unfortunately confined to the sarcastic criticism of a contemporary satirist. Lucian requires us to believe that the narratives of these pretended Livys and Sallusts were mere clumsy romances, and that the few real facts they recorded were overlaid with fictions, or distorted by rhetorical flourishes. The work which Fronto, the preceptor of Verus and Aurelius, consecrated to this interesting subject, has escaped the reflections of Lucian: possibly it was not composed till after the publication of the treatise *On the Art of Writing History*. The introduction alone remains. Its merit is trifling, and may cause us to wonder at the excessive reputation enjoyed in his own day by its author; nor can we doubt that its affected verbiage was devoted to covering all the defects, and enhancing all the merits of the imperial hero. Posterity at least was not deceived by it. The common voice of later writers declare that Verus proved wholly incompetent to direct the affairs over which he nominally presided, while some insinuated that, intoxicated by his lieutenants' successes, he dreamt that he could govern the empire alone, and actually intrigued to overthrow his colleague and patron.[2]

After a struggle of five years, Vologesus, driven from his capital and overmatched in every quarter,

[1] Lucian, *Quomodo Hist. sit Conscrib.* Of this swarm of historians we recover the names of Calpurnianus of Pompeiopolis, of Callimorphus, surgeon to a legion, of Antiochianus, of Demetrius of Sagalessus, and of Asinius Quadratus. Noel des Vergers, p. 62.

[2] Fronto, *de Princip. Hist.* ii. 337. Verus, in one of his letters, entreats Fronto to write the history of this war, offering to send him the necessary materials. The actual account, as far as our fragments extend, is a curious parallel between Trajan and Verus, in which the palm is openly given to the latter.

was compelled to sue for peace. The cession of Mesopotamia was demanded and enforced. Once only during the progress of hostilities had Verus quitted his voluptuous retreat, when he retraced his steps as far as Ephesus to receive his affianced bride, and prevent, as was surmised, the further advance of his father-in-law within his dominions. On the conclusion of peace in 166 he hastened back to Rome, where Aurelius received him with open arms, and threw a veil over his want of personal prowess by conducting a joint triumph with him.[1] The two emperors assumed the titles of Parthicus, Armeniacus, and Medicus, though Aurelius refused, at first, a share in honours for which he had not personally contended.[2] Verus, ashamed perhaps of his own demerits, pressed these honours upon him, and at last overcame his reserve. *Which of the two heroes,* asked the courtly Fronto, *ought we most to admire?*

Joint triumph of Aurelius and Verus.

A. D. 166.

It has been said that the cares of empire at home, with which Aurelius specially charged himself, were not less grave than those on the frontier. After attending his colleague into Campania, he had returned to apply all his resources to the relief of the city, which was suffering from inundations and scarcity. Casting aside his books, to which he had little leisure again to apply himself, and bidding farewell to the benches of the rhetoricians, which he had so long frequented, he took the affairs of state and the wisest counsellors of the senate to his bosom. He increased in various ways the employments and the consideration of the illustrious order. The appellate jurisdiction of this supreme court was extended by him,

M Aurelius at Rome.

His deference to the senate.

[1] Capitol. *Anton. Phil.* 12.

[2] Of these and several triumphal designations Medicus alone, it is said, never occurs in medals or inscriptions, to avoid, perhaps, a possible misinterpretation.

particularly in cases in which the prince's own interests were concerned. Hadrian had superseded the functions of the old municipal officers of Italy, the duumvirs, ædiles, and dictators of Samnium and Etruria, by the appointment of four juridici of consular rank.[1] But this institution was again revised by Aurelius, who offered the high and lucrative distinction to a larger class by extending it to prætors also.[2] Beneath these superior officers was a larger class of curators, who discharged judicial functions in the several burghs of Italy, and these were now to be selected from the whole body of the senators. Aurelius was constant in his attendance in the curia, even when he had no measures of his own to propose. When he had a *Relation* to make to the fathers he would come, even from the distance of a Campanian villa, in person, rather than introduce it by the mouth of his quæstor. Nor did he fail to attend the comitia of the senate, at which the prince's direct appointments were still formally ratified, and which, it seems, were tedious solemnities, often protracted far into the night. Yet he would never quit the assembly before the consul pronounced the venerable formula: *Conscript fathers, we no longer detain you.* The respect thus paid it was acknowledged by the gratitude of the body, and a full meed of praise accorded him by its historians. It was taken as a further compliment that when he wished to gratify a friend with the choicest of boons, instead of giving him slaves or ornaments, he conferred on him the rank of senator. None of the virtuous chiefs of Rome showed more *deference* to the senate.[3]

[1] Spartian, *Hadrian.* 19.; Capitol. *Anton. Phil.* 11.

[2] Thus we read in an inscription of C. Cornelius Thrallus, "Juridicus per Flaminiam et Umbriam," who is praised by the people of Ariminum, "Ob eximiam moderationem, et in sterilitate annonæ laboriosam fidem." From this mention of a scarcity Noel des Vergers (*Essai,* 45.) supposes that the institution may be referred to the first years of Aurelius, a very precarious conclusion.

[3] Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 10, 11.

His excellent choice of ministers.

The merits of this excellent emperor consisted, however, not so much in the vigour of his own acts, or the breadth and justness of his views, as in the choice of good ministers and able instruments. Amidst the exhaustion and lassitude of the great families at this era of luxurious security, it was not in their ranks that he could find men of shrewdness and energy to repair or sustain the machine of empire. The ministers of Aurelius were chosen from the teachers of his own favourite philosophy; they were accomplished speakers, and at the same time men of sense and practical ability. Such, we may believe, was Junius Rusticus,—*Our friend the prefect*,—as he is addressed by his patron in a rescript of *The divine brothers*, who, after being twice consul, commanded for many years in the city, and is supposed to have passed sentence from his tribunal on Justin, the Christian martyr.[1] The prefecture of the city, it seems, was now only given to persons who had been twice consul; an ample guarantee, in the eyes of the senators, against the rash and careless favouritism of the earlier Cæsars. Cornelius Fronto, another rhetorician, had attained the consulship as far back as the reign of Hadrian, but declined office in the provinces. He continued in his old age to attend and advise his imperial pupil, who treated him with the highest consideration.[2] The names, moreover, of Salvius

[1] Themistius, *Orat.* 13. 17.; *Digest.* xlix. 1. 3.: "Ex rescripto divorum fratrum," *i. e.* Aurelius and Verus. M. Aurel. *Comment.* i. 7.; Dion, lxxi. 35. The martyrdom of Justin is placed between 165 and 168.

[2] The discovery of the remains of Fronto, consisting of a large number of letters between him and his pupils Aurelius and Verus, together with a sketch of contemporary history, *Principia Historiæ*, and some miscellaneous fragments, has lowered rather than raised the reputation of the man who in his own day was considered a second Cicero. His history is a vapid panegyric, his letters idle prattle. He was, perhaps, very old at the time of writing them; but at best they cast a fatal shade over the literary character of the age.

Julianus the Jurist, of Helvius Pertinax, himself afterwards a virtuous but unfortunate emperor, of Catilius Severus, Valerius Asiaticus, Martius Verus, and other persons of high public character, are recorded in the list of prefects, as men on whom Aurelius justly bestowed his esteem and confidence.[1]

During the last years of the Parthian expedition, the government had been disquieted by despatches from both the Upper and Lower Danube, announcing repeated inroads of the barbarians along the whole course of the river. Aurelius felt that Rome was not strong enough, at least at the moment, to wage two great wars simultaneously. He had directed his officers to connive, to bribe, to temporize, till the renewal of peace in the East should leave a numerous army of veterans free for other service. The honours with which the emperors were greeted, the triumph they celebrated, the victories they proclaimed on the return of Verus, disguised to the populace the deep anxiety of their statesmen, who seem to have been struck now suddenly, and for the first time, by apprehensions of decline at the centre of the empire, and of increase of power in its assailants on the frontiers. Aurelius was evidently much depressed; Verus continued careless and insensible as ever. The younger Cæsar flung himself into the dissipations of his villa on the Clodian Way, and among his boon companions paraded the trophies of his campaigns, his troops of buffoons and players, dancers and conjurors, and all the vilest spawn of the Orontes.[2]

Inroads of the barbarians along the whole Danubian frontier.

Apprehensions of Aurelius. Supineness of Verus.

[1] Noel des Vergers, *Essai*, &c. p. 54., from Borghesi's recent investigations among the inscriptions.

[2] Capitolinus (*Ver.* 4.) compares the vices of Verus to the mad freaks of Caius, the low buffoonery of Nero, and the tasteless gluttony of Vitellius: "Amavit et aurigas, prasino favens. Gladiatorum etiam frequentius pugnas in convivio habuit." Aurelius groaned over dissipation which he deemed extravagant and vicious: "Post convivium lusum est tesseris usque ad lucem."

Pestilence spread throughout the empire by the army returning from the East.

But these noxious instruments of dissipation were not the most fatal gift the East had now conferred upon her conquerors. The army of Syria, which accompanied Verus into Italy, was deeply infected with the germs of a strange and deadly pestilence, contracted in the marshes or sands of Mesopotamia. In every town it traversed it disseminated the infection.[1] In Rome, the number of victims amounted to many thousands. The virulence of the disease was no doubt increased by the long-continued scarcity, and the general misery of the people. Superstitious fears demanded a crime and a victim. The crime was discovered in the treachery employed, as it was averred, by Avidius Cassius in the sack of Seleucia; and thence, according to report, the seeds of plague were scattered far and wide on the opening of a coffer in the temple of Apollo.[2] Cassius, indeed, was too powerful to be sacrificed to a popular outcry. We may conjecture, however, that the fierce hostility to the Christians, which now suddenly blazed forth, was due to these panic alarms. Not among the Christians only, but through the ranks of Pagan society also, prophecies of the world's impending conflagration were boldy advanced, and eagerly credited. Misery and terror, terror and imposture, went as usual hand in hand. Pretenders trifled with the popular agony for gain or notoriety. One man asserted that the secular fire would descend at the mo-

[1] Capitol. *Ver.* 8.: "Fuit ejus fati ut in eas provincias, per quas rediit, Romam usque, luem secum deferre videretur."

[2] Capitol. *l. c.*: "Nata fertur pestilentia in Babylonia, ubi de templo Apollinis ex arcula aurea, quam miles forte inciderat, spiritus pestilens evasit, atque inde Parthos orbemque complesse." The statement is repeated by Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiii. 6. 24., with the variation that the effluvium proceeded from a narrow chink or crevice in the temples. The fatal effects of subterranean gases were often the subject of wondering remark to the ancients. See Apul. *de Mundo*, p. 729., and the commentators on Amm. Marcell. *in loc.*

ment when, casting himself from a tree in the Campus Martius, he should be seen transformed into a stork. He leapt from the tree, and let a stork fly from his bosom; but the trick was discovered, and forgiven, with a pensive sigh, by the gentle Aurelius.[1] The emperor's philosophical tenets, however inconsistent with a genuine belief, recommended a reverential observance of established cults; and the enthusiasm of so tender a spirit was itself akin to superstition. He was fain to invoke in aid of the commonwealth all the rites and formulas of pagan religion. He summoned to Rome the ministers of every deity, foreign as well as national, performed a solemn lustration of the city, and delayed his departure for the war till he had celebrated a lectisternium seven days successively.[2] Meanwhile, the bodies of the dead were too numerous to be tended with the usual ceremonies. Carts and waggons were employed to convey them to their place of sepulture. Not the vulgar herd of the Suburra only, the usual victims of a pestilence, were stricken, but many of the highest rank also suffered. Aurelius marked the national character of the calamity by according to small as well as great the melancholy tribute of a public burial. The plague diverged in every direction from the line along which it had been carried. It spread from east to west, to the right and to the left, with such virulence, that one writer, at least,

[1] Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 13.

[2] The sacrifices which Aurelius made on this occasion were remembered two centuries later; and when Julian offered similar propitiations to the national divinities before engaging in his Parthian expedition, he was reminded of the epigram current in the days of his predecessor. Cf. Ammian. Marc. xxv. 4.:

οἱ βόες οἱ λευκοὶ Μάρκῳ τῷ Καίσαρι χαίρειν·
ἂν δὲ σὺ νικήσῃς ἀμμὲς ἀπωλόμεθα.

But the same venerable jest had already been applied to Augustus. Senec. *de Benefic.* iii. 27.: "Rufus, vir ordinis senatorii, inter cœnam optaverat, ne Cæsar salvus rediret ex peregrinatione quam parabat; et adjecerat, idem omnes et tauros et vitulos optare."

has ventured to affirm that more than half the population, and almost all the soldiers, perished.[1] Orosius may be credited in his fearful account of this visitation, though, with the natural feeling of his co-religionists, he ascribes it to the persecution of the Christians, which he says had already broken out in Asia and Gaul.[2] The plague, he says, extended through many provinces, and so devastated the whole of Italy, that villas, towns, and lands were everywhere left without inhabitant or cultivator, and fell to ruin, or relapsed into wildernesses. It is affirmed, too, he adds, as if from accredited records, that the legions in their winter quarters were so reduced that it was impossible to wage the Marcomannic war without raising a new army, which detained Aurelius three years at Carnuntum.[3]

Campaign of 167.

It was in 167, in the depth of this sore affliction, that the emperors went forth together; for Aurelius scrupled either to send Verus to the war without him, or to leave him in the city. The legions followed drooping with sickness and despondency; reports from the scene of warfare were terrific. The audacity of the assailants, their numbers and organization, the alarm of the provincials, the falling in of the out-posts, and defeat of frontier cohorts, combined to show that the crisis was of no common kind, and would task all the energies of the state, all the energies of its rulers.[4] But Aurelius

[1] Eutrop. viii. 12.: "Ut Romæ ac per Italiam provinciasque maxima hominum pars, militum omnes fere copiæ languore defecerint." Ammian Marcell. *l. c.*: "Ab ipsis Persarum finibus adusque Rhenum et Gallias."

[2] Oros. vii. 15.: "Secuta est lues." Unfortunately, we cannot determine the year of the martyrdom of Justin, which Tillemont puts in 168, two years after the breaking out of the pestilence. Clinton, however, assigns the martyrdom of Polycarp to 166. Greswell, *Suppl. Dissertations*, p. 247. foll. to 164.

[3] Oros. *l. c.*: "Delectu militum quem triennio jugiter apud Carnuntum M. Antoninus habuit."

[4] The Quadi and Marcomanni, it seems, had penetrated into Italy,

was as yet untried in war: to his subjects he was known at best as a laborious administrator of domestic affairs; while Verus had only shown himself abroad to earn general contempt. The citizens were not reassured by their departure; and it was hardly to be expected that the barbarians would be terrified by their arrival. But the name of Imperator still commanded the respect of the nations. When the emperors reached Aquileia, they heard that the Marcomanni had already recrossed the Danube, and the Quadi, who had lately lost their own king, offered to accept a ruler from the Romans. Verus, flushed with this first success, and already weary of a campaign which placed him under the eye of an austere colleague, proposed at once to return; but Aurelius, assuming the rights of an elder and superior, forbade him to leave the camp.[1] The retreat, however, of the barbarians allowed both the brothers to retrace their steps before the winter, and in the absence of all notes of time in our brief and meagre histories, the legend of a medal, and the casual notice of a statute, may serve to show that Aurelius was in Rome at the end of 167, and the beginning of the following year.

The emperors advance to Aquileia.

Meanwhile every effort was made to recruit the legions, to reinforce the garrisons, to collect arms and munitions of war. With the return of the military season, the emperors exchanged the toga for the sagum, and once more revisited their camps. But their levies were not yet completed, the heart of the empire was stricken with languor, and its limbs shook and withered. It was necessary to enrol the slaves for service, as in the crisis of the Punic invasion, and after the overthrow of Varus.[2]

Second campaign.

had sacked Opitergium, and even laid siege to Aquileia. Ammian. Marcell. xxix. 6.

[1] Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 14. [2] Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 21.

The mustering of the forces at Aquileia served to concentrate the fatal sickness which had abated none of its virulence, and with which the skill of Galen, the great physician, who was summoned to head-quarters, was unable to contend.[1] The emperors, indeed, now crossed the Julian Alps, and presented themselves in Illyricum, where they provided for the defence of Italy, instead of striking at the advancing power of the enemy. Again Verus urged his colleague to return. Baffled by a foe more invincible than the barbarians, they again suspended their operations, and retraced their steps. They journeyed amicably in the same litter, the elder still striving to screen the weaknesses of the younger; but the days of Verus were already numbered; shattered by fatigue and anxiety, if not by dissipation, he fell sick on the road, and expired at Altinum in Venetia.[2]

The emperors cross the Alps.

Return and death of Verus.

The decease of an unworthy associate was a relief to the survivor. Aurelius could bear his own troubles more easily when no longer required to urge a reluctant colleague, whom he would not abandon to contempt. He desired the senate to decree a consecration; nevertheless, he did not fail to assure it that the victories over the Parthians had been gained by his own politic dispositions, not by the skill or courage of the stripling whom he proposed to deify. But the perils of the state now impressed him more deeply than ever. His gentle

A. D. 169.
A. U. 922.

[1] Galen was specially charged with the care of Commodus, the young son of Aurelius (born A.D. 161), with whom he soon left the camp for Rome, and there occupied himself in the composition of his voluminous medical treatises.

[2] Capitol. *l. c.*, *Ver.* 9., *M. Anton. Phil.* 14.: "Lucius apoplexia correptus periit." This writer rejects, with honest indignation, the fable that Aurelius caused his brother to be poisoned: "Nemo est principum quem non gravis fama perstringat . . . . nota est fabula quam Marci non capit vita . . . . sed hoc nefas est de Marco putari . . . . totam purgatam confutatamque respuimus."

nature was harrowed by the misery around him, inflicted by a Power with which it seemed even impious to contend. The weight of empire was too heavy a burden for the sensitive student; yet of all the Romans none bore it more manfully. He plunged into the struggle with the barbarians as a refuge from graver apprehensions; yet when he could steal an hour from affairs for study or meditation, he still patiently reviewed the dogmas of philosophy, or examined his own heart and conscience by abstract and eternal principles. The contest with the assailants was long and dubious. It is represented as a simultaneous, and even a combined attack, of all the races on the northern frontier, who may be ranged under the three national divisions of Germans, Scythians, and Sarmatians; though we may question the fact of an actual league among tribes so many, so various, and so distant.[1]

Aurelius seems to have mustered his legions at Carnuntum, the centre of the menaced line of defence, but his hand was long restrained by the weakness of his forces. Nor, with all his devotion to duty, did this gallant prince possess the vigour or the genius of a great commander.[2] He cast himself on the advice of his officers, and even of his nobles, and was wont to pretend that it better became him to follow the counsel of many, than compel all to submit to his sole direction.[3] This

M. Aurelius on the Danube A.D. 169. A.U. 922.

[1] From Dion, lxxi. 12., and Capitolinus, *M. Anton. Phil.* 22., we get the names of the Marcomanni, Quadi, Narisci, and Hermunduri (German); the Latringi, Buri, Iazyges, Astingi, Cotini, Dancrigi (Sarmatian); the Victovales, Sosibes, Sicobates, Roxolani, Bastarnæ, Peucini, Alani, and Costoboci (Scythian). See Greenwood, *Hist. of the Germans*, i. 176., who remarks on the improbability of these nations having formed a common confederacy.

[2] Aurelius speaks disparagingly of his own natural genius: this may be modesty, but it agrees with the idea I form of him. *Comment.* v. 5.: δριμύτητά σου οὐχ ἔχουσι θαυμάσαι. ἔστω· ἀλλὰ ἕτερα πολλά, ἐφ' ὧν οὐκ ἔχεις εἰπεῖν, οὐ γὰρ πέφυκα. ἐκεῖνα οὖν παρέχου.

[3] Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 22. Avidius Cassius complained of his

indulgence they seem to have repaid by complaining of his severity, and carping at his studies; but the war with the Marcomanni cost the lives of many of their number, and the Ulpian Forum was crowded with statues erected in their honour by their master.[1] Even through the winter were the Romans compelled to confront a foe, who chose the season of frost and ice for his inroads. They fought more than once on the bosom of the frozen Danube, when they could only keep their footing by placing their shields beneath them.[2] At other times the campaign was carried on during the greatest heats of summer. The Quadi surrounded and reduced them to straits by cutting off their supply of water. A sudden storm, which filled the Roman camp with a seasonable rain-

Remarkable victory over the Quadi. A. D. 174.

fall, while the enemy was disordered by violent lightnings, was regarded as miraculous, and ascribed to the incantations of an Egyptian magician, to the prayers of a legion of Christians, or to the favour of Jove towards the best of mortals, according to the various prejudices of different observers.[3] The question itself would hardly

neglecting the empire for his books · "M. Antoninus philosophatur, et quærit de clementia, et de animis, et de honesto et justo; nec sentit pro republica." Vulcatius Gallicanus, in *Avid. Cass.* 14.

[1] Capitol. *l. c.* The barbarians seem to have penetrated into the provinces in various quarters. Pertinax, afterwards emperor, succeeded in driving them out of Rhætia and Noricum. Capitol. *Pertin.* 2.; Dion, lxxi. 3. The presence of a great number of legions along the Danubian frontier is attested by inscriptions. Noel des Vergers, *Essai*, see p. 77. foll.

[2] Dion, lxvi. 7.

[3] See the account of the event as given by Dion, with the criticism of the Christian Xiphilinus; and compare the famous lines of Claudian, xxviii. 349.:

"Chaldæa vago seu carmina ritu
Armavere Deos, seu, quod reor, omne Tonantis
Obsequium Marci mores potuere mereri."

Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 24.: "Fulmen de cœlo precibus suis contra hostium machinamentum extorsit, suis pluvia impetrata." Tertullian, from whom the church-writers seem to have taken the idea of a Christian miracle, declares that letters of Aurelius to that effect were in existence. *Apolog.* 5. (cf. *ad Scap.* 4.). Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* v. 5.,

be worth an allusion, but for the pertinacity with which it was once debated, and the importance even recently assigned to it. But, however insignificant the discussion may now appear, an interest will still attach to the event, as long as the sculptures on the column of Aurelius, which still adorns the principal avenue of modern Rome, presents to us the figure of the Olympian Jupiter casting from the opened heavens his beneficent rain-flood, and his appalling thunderbolts.

Troubles of Aurelius, domestic as well as public.

But the victory thus signally gained was chequered by many reverses. The arms of Rome, however successful in the field, were impeded by the climate and the soil, by the wide spaces to be traversed, and the ubiquity of the enemy. Aurelius was retained in the north through several summers; the treaties he made with his adversaries were repeatedly broken by them again, and the peace which was to secure him a triumph slipped constantly from his hand. To the public troubles which encompassed him were added domestic calamities. Of the two sons, in whom he might hope to find a comfort and support in his old age, a blessing to which none of his predecessors could look since Vespasian, Annius, the elder, fell sick in early youth, and died after a long decline; Commodus, the younger, though placed under the charge of the sage and gentle Fronto, displayed, from the first, an evil nature. A daughter named Faustina died also in opening girlhood. The father's tenderness for his children is attested in

Premature deaths of his children.

Evil nature of Commodus.

says merely λόγος ἔχει. Orosius, vii. 15: "exstare dicuntur." Eusebius refers to a certain Appollinaris for the statement that the emperor gave to the legion the name of "Fulminata," in attestation of the Chirstian miracle; but it is enough to say that there was a legion already so called under Trajan. Of recent writers Mr Fynes Clinton has given a full collection of the authorities. (Appendix to *Fast. Rom.* p. 24.) Professor Blunt, of Cambridge, the latest defender of Patristic miracles, has abandoned this one, which will hardly be maintained after his rejection by any English Protestant divine. See *Lectures on the Hist. of the Church*, p. 295.

a letter to Fronto, which agreeably delineates his amiable character.[1] His regard for their mother was tender even to weakness, if at least she was as unworthy of a husband's confidence as some historians have represented her; yet even from his most intimate friend he disguises his vexation at the proofs he received of her infidelity. Her guilt, indeed, he is said to have acknowledged and deplored; but he refused to dismiss her, pleading, as was reported in excuse, that if he divorced his wife he ought also to surrender the empire her dowry.[2] Even at the commencement of their union, while Aurelius was occupied with affairs at Rome, or plunged in his studies in the recesses of the palace, Faustina, in the voluptuous villas of Campania, rejected the restraints of matronhood with flagrant indecency.[3] Such is the account which has received general credence; but allowance must be made for the ribaldry of contemporary anecdote, and for the hatred of the next generation towards the mother of the tyrant Commodus. The insinuation that this son was the base-born child of a gladiator, suggested, perhaps, by his passion for the shows of the arena, is belied by Fronto's warm assertion of his likeness to Aurelius, and by the testimony of existing coins which strikingly confirms it.

Infidelity of Faustina.

Nor can we affirm with confidence another charge against Faustina, of still graver public importance. The health of Aurelius caused her much anxiety; for Commodus was frivolous and inexperienced, and, among the military chiefs now rising to eminence, she saw perhaps more than one who might snatch at the purple on his de-

Treason of Avidius Cassius.

[1] Fronton. *Epist.* i. p. 258, 259.

[2] Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 19.: "Dixisse fertur, si uxorem dimittimus, reddamus et dotem." Comp. 3. 29. It should be observed that no such charges are brought against Faustina by Dion.

[3] Fronton. *Epist.* ii. p. 52, 54.: "Tam simili facie ut nihil sit hoc simili similius."

cease. Aurelius was not perhaps originally sickly; in his youth he had enjoyed all martial and athletic exercises; but his devotion to study, according to Dion, had early weakened his health, and the fatigue and cares of his painful position may have aggravated every morbid symptom. Faustina had accompanied her husband during his campaigns. After the rout of the Quadi, when the army selected him as Imperator, they proclaimed her *Mother of the Camps.*[1] She was on the spot, and from personal observation she was convinced that he had not long to live. She addressed herself, so it was asserted, to Avidius Cassius, assured him that the throne would presently be vacant, and incited him to assume the purple at the head of his legions, with the promise of her support, and the offer of her hand.[2] She hoped thus to preserve her own position, and secure a throne, at least in reversion, for her son. Cassius, a descendant of the tyrannicide, professed hereditary hatred to tyrants, and was wont to lament that the republic could not be rid of one Imperator but by the hand of another.[3] Even in his youth he had harboured the idea of overthrowing the elder Antoninus, but his impetuosity had been checked and disguised by a prudent and loyal father. Verus had conceived just fears of his ambition, and had warned Aurelius against him. Aurelius had replied in the tone of

[1] Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 26.; Dion, lxxi. 10.

[2] Dion, lxxi. 22. Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 24 : "Ut quidam volunt." Vulcatius Gallicanus, *Avid. Cass.* 7.: "Ut quidam dicunt." It is admitted that, according to another rumour, this story was a pretence of Cassius, to persuade his soldiers that he had certain information of the emperor's death. Gallicanus tells us that he takes the account from the history of Marius Maximus, but expressly says that he does not believe in the alleged guilt of Faustina. The reason, indeed, which he gives, that her letters exist, in which she urged her husband to punish the rebellion with severity, is not very conclusive. See cc. 9. 10, 11.

[3] Avidius Cassius claimed descent from C. Cassius, who had held the Syrian prefecture. His father was a Greek, a rhetorician of Cyrrhus, named Heliodorus, who had become prefect of Egypt.

Stoical fatalism; that *no prince ever killed his successor*, and had added, repeating the sentiment of Hadrian, *How wretched is the lot of rulers, whose fears of treason are never credited till they have fallen by it!*[1] He refused to adopt any precautions, and was content to leave the Syrian prefecture in the hands of one whom he knew to be brave and able, and a bulwark of the ancient discipline; one who, in a luxurious age and a voluptuous capital, affected the character of a Marius, and put to death without mercy the officer who, without orders to fight, had gained him a victory; who finally had quelled a mutiny by throwing himself unarmed into the ranks, and inviting the soldiers to slay him if they dared.[2] Such was the man who suddenly announced at Antioch that Aurelius was dead, assumed the title of emperor, and having received the ensigns of sovereignty from a trusty adherent, whom he named his prætorian prefect, invited the legions to sanction his usurpation. But violent and headstrong as he was, he had failed in his calculations. The legions detested him; they rose at once against him, and slew him on the spot, without awaiting the order of the emperor. The report, meanwhile, of his defection reached Rome, and the senate boldly proclaimed him a public enemy; but its courage rapidly evaporated on the rumour that he was in full march for Italy, prepared, in the emperor's absence, to take dire vengeance for the insult, and give up the city to plunder. The head of the traitor was conveyed to Aurelius, who beheld it with pity and concern.[3]

[1] Gallicanus, *Avid. Cass.* 2.: "Quod avus tuus Hadrianus dixerit; . . . . ejus autem exemplum ponere, quam Domitiani, qui hoc primus dixisse fertur, malui."

[2] Gallic. c. 4.: "Meruit timeri quia non timuit," an allusion to Lucan, v. 317. Capitol. *Anton. Phil.* 21.: "Cum per Egyptum Bucolici milites gravia multa fecissent, per Avidium Cassium retusi sunt."

[3] Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 26.: "Doluit denique Cassium exstinctum, dicens, voluisse se sine senatorio sanguine imperium transigere."

What would he have done to you had he conquered? exclaimed the bystanders. The sage calmly appealed to his own piety and virtue, and showed that all the princes who had perished violently before him, had fallen by their own deserts.[1] He entreated the senate, to whom he left the punishment of this public crime, to deal mercifully with the guilty, requesting that no member at least of their order should suffer under his rule. The family of the traitor he caused to be spared, and even generously provided for them, and a few centurions only were sacrificed to the exigencies of military discipline.[2] The senate, among whom Cassius may have had some half-concealed accomplices, was delighted at a clemency by which it personally benefited, and poured forth its praise and gratitude in broken exclamations:—*O pious Antonine, the gods preserve thee! O clement Antonine, the gods preserve thee! thou mightest and wouldest not!—We have done what we should do!—May Commodus have his legitimate sovereignty!—Confirm thou thine own offspring; make our children safe and happy!—Violence cannot harm good government!—The tribunitian power for Commodus!—Thy presence and protection for Commodus!—Hail to thy philosophy, to thy patience, to thy learning, to thy nobility, to thy innocence!—Thou*

[1] Gallic. *Avid. Cass.* 8.: "Non sic Deos coluimus, nec sic vivimus, ut ille nos vinceret . . . . . . meruisse Neronem, meruisse Caligulam; Othonem et Vitellium nec imperare voluisse." Galba's avarice he regarded as a public crime. The old story of burning the papers of the criminal, that his accomplices might not be known, is repeated of M. Aurelius by Ammianus Marcellinus, xxi. 16.

[2] The letters between Aurelius, Faustina, and the senate on this subject, are very interesting, and seem to be genuine. The children of Avidius Cassius were allowed to retain a portion of their patrimony, and were admitted to public office. Commodus, however, on his accession, caused them "all to be burnt alive." Gallic. *Avid. Cass.* 13. In consequence of this attempted revolt in Syria, Aurelius ordained that in future no officer should hold the prefecture of the province in which he had been born. Dion, lxxi. 31.

conquerest thy foes; thou overcomest thy adversaries! —The gods protect thee!—and so on, all speaking together.[1]

Aurelius repairs to the East.

The news of the defection of Cassius had reached Aurelius on the Danube. He summoned his son, now in his fifteenth year, to his side, invested him with the robe of manhood, styled him *Prince of the Youth*, and designated him for the consulship. Having thus defied the assault upon his dynasty, he went forward to crush it. Before he reached Syria the enemy had fallen; but Aurelius was occupied for some months in making dispositions for the future. During this progress he lost Faustina, who died suddenly at Halala, at the foot of the Taurus. Faithful to the last to the unfaithful, he desired the senate to decree her divine honours; he gave her name to the place of her decease, and built her there a temple; he established, moreover, a new foundation of Faustinian orphan girls.[2] Aurelius had never before visited the East. He examined with great interest the most renowned seats of ancient wisdom, and favoured them with tokens of his munificence.[3] Repairing from Antioch to Alexandria, where Cassius had gained support, he not only pardoned all offences, but condescended to act the part of a private citizen, frequenting the temples, schools, and lecture-rooms in the garb of a philosopher. On his voyage homeward he lingered also for a time at Athens, and *to prove himself without sin*, in the true spirit of the

Death of Faustina. A.D. 175.

[1] Gallic. *Avid. Cass.* 13. The date of the insurrection of Avidius Cassius is fixed by Clinton to the year 175.

[2] Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 26.; Dion, lxxi. 29. Some said that she killed herself for fear of her complicity with Cassius being discovered; others that she died of an attack of gout.

[3] Capitol. *l. c.* I do not know how else to interpret "Apud multas (Orientales provincias) philosophiæ vestigia reliquit." Philostratus in the "Lives" tells some anecdotes of Aurelius and the sophists, and also mentions that he was obliged to punish the incorrigible Antiochians by interdicting for a time their spectacles.

Stoic religion, caused himself to be initiated in the mysteries.[1] In the autumn of 176 he finally reached Italy, landing at Brundisium, where he laid aside the military cloak and ensigns, and entered the city in the robe of peace. The senate decreed him a triumph over the Sarmatians, in which the young Commodus was also associated.

Triumph over the Sarmatians. A.D. 176.

An arch was erected in the Campus on the Flaminian Way, which was standing till modern times: some bas-reliefs have been saved from the ruin, which represent the apotheosis of Faustina. Aurelius sits below, gazing with affection on his consort, wafted upwards on the wings of a spirit. The graceful column, banded like that of Trajan with spiral sculpture, on which his exploits are recorded, still seems to follow her ascent to heaven. It was crowned with the statue of the emperor, who deserved to share with Trajan the title of the Best; and for many centuries these two noblest products of heathen culture, in the realms respectively of action and reflection, occupied the pre-eminent elevation which Christian piety has since assigned to St. Peter and St. Paul.[2]

The Antonine column.

Shows and largesses, as usual, followed, some administrative measures were promulgated, Commodus was associated in the Tribunitian power, and married with modest solemnities. But the chief of the empire could not resume his place in the senate and the palace. The Sarmatians had been triumphed over; nevertheless, they rose again, or continued still in arms. The Marco-

Renewal of war with the Sarmatians and Marcomanni.

[1] Capitol. c. 27.: "Ut se innocentem probaret." Aurelius, according to Dion, lxxi. 31., instituted salaried teachers of all sciences at Athens, "for people of all nations;" *πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις διδασκάλους ἐπὶ πάσης λόγου παιδείας μισθὸν ἐτήσιον φέροντας*: which seems to indicate the establishment of lectures in various languages. If so, it was no doubt a novelty.

[2] That this column was originally surmounted by a statue of the emperor appears from the medals. This statue had long fallen, when Pope Sixtus V. replaced it in 1589 by a figure of the Apostle Paul. Bunsen's *Rom.* iii. 3. p. 330.

manni, the Hermunduri, the Quadi, were easily tempted to resume them.[1] The efforts of the last ten years must be repeated, with failing confidence and diminished strength, against a foe more experienced, and perhaps even more audacious.

Aurelius again leaves Rome for the frontiers, and gains a victory.

Aurelius again girded on his armour, and required his son to attend upon him. He hurled a blood-stained javelin before the temple of Bellona as a defiance and proclamation of war, and went forth to confront the enemy.[2] For three years he continued to prosecute his sad and painful task, to exhaust his own vigour, and the vigour of the empire, in a struggle in which ultimate success might well seem hopeless. He gained at least one considerable success by the hands of his lieutenant Paternus, and was hailed Imperator for the tenth time by the soldiers. The historians, indeed, affirm that the crowning victory was in sight, and that another year would have sufficed to reduce these restless foes to entire subjection.[3] This, however, is quite incredible. A decisive victory might have compelled them to offer tribute, but probably no victory would have insured their paying it. Nor, indeed, was any such victory now to be gained, and, instead of their tribute being paid to the Romans, the great Sarmatian war was concluded by a peace opportunely bought by Rome. This final disgrace Aurelius did not live himself to witness. His weakly frame sank at last under its fatigues, and he was still, perhaps, buoyed

Death of M. Aurelius. A.D. 180. A.U. 933.

[1] Aurelius had required the Marcomanni to remove to a distance of 38 stadia from the bank of the Danube, a very trifling demand, and appointed fixed days and places for their intercourse with the Romans. The Iazyges and Quadi consented to restore their captives. The former sent back as many as 100,000; the latter notoriously neglected to observe this condition. Dion, lxxi. 15, 16.

[2] Dion, lxxi. 33., adding, ὥς γε καὶ τῶν συγγενομένων αὐτῷ ἤκουσα. The solemnity was apparently already antiquated.

[3] Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil. l. c.*; Dion, *l. c.*

up by hopes destined never to be accomplished, when he was rescued from impending disappointment by a fever, which carried him off in his camp at Vindobona.[1]

Reflections on the death of Aurelius.

The despondency which had seized on the gentle emperor's spirits is strongly marked in the circumstances of his last hours. While anticipating his own decease with satisfaction, and even with eagerness, he regarded himself as only a fellow-traveller on the common road of life with all around him, and took leave of his friends as one who was but just preceding them. If he regarded the condition of public affairs, the prospect of his son succeeding him was not such as to console him; for he could not hide from himself that Commodus was vicious, cruel, and illiterate.[2] The indulgence he had shown to his consort's irregularities might be pardoned by the state, to which they

[1] At Vindobona (Vienna), according to Victor; at Sirmium, according to Tertullian, *Apol.* 25. He seems to have believed himself that his disorder was natural, for, as is said, he desired his son to leave him that he might avoid the risk of infection. Almost his last words were a request to his attendants not to grieve for him, but to turn their thoughts to the still prevailing pestilence, and to their common perils. He even hastened his own end by abstaining from food. Dion, however, affirms for certain, that, though sick, he was actually cut off by poison, administered by the physicians in his son's interest: *οὐχ ὑπὸ τῆς νόσου ἣν καὶ τότε ἐνόσησεν, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ τῶν ἰατρῶν, ὡς ἐγὼ σαφῶς ἤκουσα, τῷ Κομμόδῳ χαριζομένων.* The story may stand or fall with our general opinion of Dion's veracity. I am sorry to take leave of an author on whom I have had to lean so often and so long, with the expression of my distrust in his sources of secret history. From the first he shows a disposition to seize on the most flagrant imputations conveyed by his authorities, and as he approaches his own times these authorities are often mere private anecdotists. Capitolinus, who referred to Marius Maximus and to published histories, says nothing of this pretended crime, nor does Herodian.

[2] Capitol. *M. Anton. Phil.* 28.: "Fertur filium mori voluisse, cum eum talem videret futurum, qualis exstitit post ejus mortem; ne, ut ipse dicebat, similis Neroni, Caligulæ, et Domitiano esset." His last words, addressed to the centurion of the watch, according to Zonaras (xii. 2.), were, "Turn to the rising sun, for I am setting."

were of little moment; but his weakness in leaving to his graceless offspring the command of a world-wide empire must reflect more strongly on his memory. He may have judged, indeed, that the danger to the state from a bad prince was less than the danger from a disputed succession, especially in the face of the disasters accumulating around it. On his death-bed he warned his son not to underrate the peril from the barbarians, who, if at the moment worsted and discouraged, would soon revive, and return again to the assault with increasing vigour. And so he left the laws of inheritance, as now ordinarily received, to take their course, indicating his will that Commodus should succeed him by the simple form of recommending him to the care of his officers, and to the favour of the immortal gods. On the seventh day of his illness he admitted none but his unworthy son to his chamber, and after a few words dismissed him, covered his head for sleep, and passed away alone and untended. Born on the 20th of April, 121, and dying on the 17th of March 180, he had almost completed his fifty-ninth year. His career had been divided into three nearly equal portions: the first to his association in the empire with Antoninus; the second, to his accession to complete sovereignty; the third, from thence to his decease. The first was the season of his general education, the second that of his training for empire, in the last he exercised power uncontrolled. In each he had acquitted himself well, in each he had gained himself love and admiration; but the earlier periods were eminently prosperous and happy; the crowning period was a time of trial, of peril, fatigue, distress, and apprehension. Historical parallels between men of different times and circumstances are very apt to mislead us, yet I cannot refrain from indicating the comparison, which might be drawn with unusual precision between the wise, the virtuous, the much-

suffering Aurelius, and our own great and good king Alfred. Both arrived early and unexpectedly to power; both found their people harassed by the attacks of importunate enemies; they assumed with firmness the attitude of resistance and defence, and gained many victories in the field, though neither could fail to acknowledge the unequal conditions of the struggle. Both found themselves at the head of a weak and degenerate society, whose hour of dissolution had well-nigh struck. Nevertheless, they contended manfully in its behalf, and strove to infuse their own gallant spirit into a people little worthy of their championship. But Aurelius and Alfred were not warriors only. They were men of letters by natural predilection and early habit; they were legislators, administrators, and philosophers, with this difference, that the first came at the end of a long course of civilized government, the second almost at its beginning; the first at the mournful close of one period of mental speculation, the second at the fresh and hopeful commencement of another. The one strove to elevate the character of his subjects by the example of his own scrupulous self-examination; the other by precepts of obedience to an external revelation. But both were, from their early days, weak in body, and little fit to cope with the appalling fatigues of their position; both, if I mistake not, were sick at heart, and felt that their task was beyond their power, and quitted life prematurely, with little reluctance. In one respect, however, their lot was different. The fortunes of the people of our English Alfred, after a brief and distant period of obscuration, have ever increased in power and brightness, like the sun ascending to its meridian. The decline of which Aurelius was the melancholy witness was irremediable and final, and his pale solitary star was the last apparent in the Roman firmament.

M. Aurelius compared with Alfred the Great.

The barbarian now stronger and the empire weaker than of old.

The circumstances of the empire might indeed well inspire profound anxiety in the breast of one to whom its maintenance was confided. Hitherto we have seen the frontiers assailed in many quarters, and the energies of the bravest princes tasked in their defence. But these attacks have been local and desultory. The Chatti on the Rhine, the Marcomanni on the Upper, the Sarmatians on the Lower Danube, the Roxolani on the shores of the Euxine, have often assailed and vexed the provinces, but separately and at different times; Aurelius had to make head against all these enemies at once. The unity of the empire imparted a germ of union to its assailants. Hence no champion of Rome had so hard a task; hence Aurelius, far from making permanent conquests beyond his frontiers, stood everywhere on the defensive, and confronted the foe by his lieutenants in Gaul, Pannonia, Dacia or Mœsia, while he planted himself commonly in the centre of his line of stations, at Carnuntum, Vindobona, or Sirmium: hence his wars were protracted through a period of twelve years, and though his partial victories gained him ten times the title of Imperator, none was sufficiently decisive to break the forces banded against him. The momentary submission of one tribe or another led to no general result; notwithstanding his own sanguine hopes, and the fond persuasion of his countrymen, his last campaign saw the subjugation of Scythia and the safety of the empire still distant and doubtful. The barbarians were stronger at this crisis than ever, stronger in unity, stronger in arms and tactics, stronger possibly in numbers. Neither to Marius, we may believe, nor to Germanicus, nor to Trajan, would they now have yielded as heretofore. But the empire was at least as much weaker. The symptoms of decline, indeed, were as yet hardly manifest to common

observation; under ordinary circumstances they might still have eluded the notice even of statesmen; but in the stress of a great calamity they became manifest to all. The chief of the state was deeply impressed with them. Against anxiety and apprehension he struggled as a matter of duty, but the effort was sore and hopeless; and from the anticipation of disasters beyond his control he escaped, when possible, to pensive meditations on his own moral nature, which at least might lie within it.

Symptoms of decline of the empire; contraction of monetary transactions from the diminution of the circulating medium.

The brilliancy of the city, and the great provincial capitals, the magnificence of their shows and entertainments, still remained, perhaps, undimmed. The dignity of the temples and palaces of Greece and Rome stood, even in their best days, in marked contrast with the discomfort and squalor of their lanes and cabins. The spacious avenues of Nero concealed perhaps more miserable habitations than might be seen in the narrow streets of Augustus; but as yet we hear no distinct murmurs of poverty among the populace. The causes, indeed, were already at work which, in the second or third generation, reduced the people of the towns to pauperism, and made the public service an intolerable burden: the decline, namely, of agriculture and commerce, the isolation of the towns, the disappearance of the precious metals, the return of society to a state of barter, in which every petty community strove to live on its own immediate produce. Such, at a later period, was the condition of the empire, as revealed in the codes of the fourth century. These symptoms were doubtless strongly developed in the third, but we have at least no evidence of them in the second. We may reasonably suppose, indeed, that there was a gradual, though slow, diminution in the amount of gold and silver in circulation. The result would be felt first in the provinces, and latest in the cities and Rome itself,

but assuredly it was already in progress. Two texts of Pliny assert the constant drain of specie to the East; and the assertion is confirmed by the circumstances of the case; for the Indians, and the nations beyond India, who transmitted to the West their silks and spices, cared little for the wines and oils of Europe, still less for the manufactures in wool and leather which formed the staples of commerce in the Mediterranean.[1] There was still a great, perhaps an increasing, demand for these metals in works of art and ornament, and much was consumed in daily use, much withdrawn from circulation and eventually lost by the thriftless habit of hoarding. But the supply from the mines of Thrace, Spain, and Germany was probably declining, for it was extracted by forced labour, the most expensive, the most harassing, and the most precarious. The difficulty of maintaining the yield of the precious metals is marked in the severe regulations of the later emperors, and is further attested by the progressive debasement of the currency.[2]

Decrease in the population,

Not more precise is our information respecting the movement of the population, which was also at this period on the verge of decline. To the partial complaints of such a decline in Italy, muttered, as they generally were, by the poets or satirists, I have hitherto paid little heed. In statements of this kind there is generally much false sentiment, some angry misrepresentation. The substitution of slave for free labour in many parts of Italy, may have had the appearance of a decline in population, while it actually indicated no more than a movement and transfer. It was more important, however, in the future it foreshadowed than in the present

and substitution of slave for free labour, and decline in the number of slaves.

[1] Plin. *Hist. Nat.* vi. 26., xii. 41. The sums are stated at 400,000*l.* annually to India, and 800,000*l.* to the East generally.

[2] *Cod. Justin.* xi. § 7. 4, 7.; Akerman's *Roman Coins*, p. xiv.

reality. The slave population was not reproductive; it was only kept at its level by fresh drafts from abroad. Whenever the supply should be cut off, the residue would rapidly dwindle. This supply was maintained partly by successful wars, but still more by a regular and organized traffic. The slaves from the North might be exchanged for Italian manufactures and produce; but the vendors from many parts, such as Arabia and Ethiopia, central Africa, and even Cappadocia and other districts of Asia Minor, would take, I suppose, nothing but specie. With the contraction of the currency, the trade would languish, and under this depression a country like Italy, which was almost wholly stocked by importation, would become quickly depopulated. Still more, on the decline of the slave population, there would follow a decline of production, a decline in the means of the proprietors, a decline in the condition of the free classes, and consequently in their numbers also. That such a decline was actually felt under the Flavian emperors, appears in the sudden adoption of the policy of alimentation, or public aid to impoverished freemen.[1]

Effects of vice flowing from the institution of slavery.

Nor was it in this way only that slavery tended to the decline of population. Slavery in ancient, and doubtless in all times, was a hot-bed of vice and selfish indulgence, enervating the spirit and vital forces of mankind, discouraging legitimate marriage, and enticing to promiscuous and barren concubinage. The fruit of such hateful unions, if fruit there were, or could be, engaged little regard from their selfish fathers, and

[1] We have seen that M. Aurelius instituted a new foundation of this kind in honour of Faustina. His bad successor seized upon these and similar funds. Pertinax found the alimentations nine years in arrear, and at the same time such a deficit in his treasury, that it was impossible to revive them. Capitol. *Pertin.* 9. They were restored, however, or replaced by new foundations, in more favourable times. Lamprid. *Alex. Sever.* 57.

both law and usage continued to sanction the exposure of infants, from which the female sex undoubtedly suffered most.[1] The losses of Italy from this horrid practice were probably the greatest; but the provinces also lost proportionably; the imitation of Roman habits was rife on the remotest frontiers; the conquests of the empire were consolidated by the attractions of Roman indulgence and sensuality; slavery threw discredit on all manual labour, and engendered a false sentiment of honour, which constrained the poorer classes of freemen to dependence and celibacy; vice and idleness went hand in hand, and combined to stunt the moral and physical growth of the Roman citizen, leaving his weak and morbid frame exposed in an unequal contest to the fatal influences of his climate.[2]

If, however, the actual amount of population in Italy and other metropolitan districts had but lately begun sensibly to decline, for some generations it

[1] I have touched on this subject in chapter xl. It is not necessary to refer to texts for the commonness of infanticide among the ancients. Tacitus specifies the Jews and the Germans as remarkable exceptions. (*Hist.* v. 5.; *Germ.* 19.) That the practice was still in use in the third century appears from the *Digest*, xxviii. 2.; nor was it forbidden, even by the Christian emperors, before Valentinian. That such was the fate of female oftener than of male children may be easily supposed. So Terence, *Heaut.* iv. 1. 12. "Meministin' me gravidam, et mihi te maximo opere edicere, Si puellam parerem, nolle tolli?" and Apuleius, *Metam.* x. p. 722.; Tertullian, *ad Nat.* 15. See C. G. Zumpt, *Bevölkerung in Alterthum.* p. 70.

[2] Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* iii. 24., seems to intimate that, in his opinion, there was a great decline of population in Italy since the time when (in the third century, B.C.) she had armed 700,000 foot and 70,000 horse. Plutarch, *de Defect. Orac.* 8., says that Greece, in his day, maintained only 3,000 hoplites. Such statements are fallacious. We may observe that in the heat of the great European war, at the beginning of this century, Great Britain had a force of 800,000 men of all arms and services, while ten years ago, being a time of profound peace, she had not, perhaps, a quarter of that number, yet her population had nearly doubled. There seems, however, to be direct evidence that parts both of Greece and Italy had much declined even in the second century.

had been recruited mainly from a foreign stock, and was mingled with the refuse of every nation, civilized and barbarian.[1] Slaves, freedmen, clients of the rich and powerful, had glided by adoption into the Roman gentes, the names of which still retained a fallacious air of antiquity, while their members had lost the feelings and principles which originally signalized them. As late as the time of the younger Pliny, we find the gentile names of the republic still common, though many of them have ceased to recur on the roll of the great magistracies, where they have been supplanted by others, hitherto obscure or unknown; but the surnames of Pliny's friends and correspondents, which distinguish the family from the house, are in numerous instances strange to us, and often grotesque and barbarous. The gradual exhaustion of the true Roman blood had been already marked and deplored under Claudius, and there can be no doubt, though materials are wanting for tracing it, that the flux continued to gather force through succeeding generations.[2]

The decay of moral principles which hastened the disintegration of Roman society was compensated by

[1] There can be no question of the fact, though the texts referring to it bear a rhetorical complexion. See, for instance, Seneca, *ad Helv.* 5.: "Videbis majorem partem esse, quæ relictis sedibus suis venerit in maximam quidem et pulcherrimam urbem, non tamen suam."

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 27.: "Plurimis equitum, plerisque senatoribus non aliunde originem trahi." Zumpt, *Bevölkerung in Alterthum.* p. 37., suspects that Tacitus himself was of servile origin. I observe above forty surnames in Pliny's letters which are not to be found in the Onomasticon to Cicero. Of these there are three classes on which I should fix as probably indicating servile origin: 1. Greek; as Archippus, Apollinaris, Aristo, Eumolpus, Polyænus, Thrasea: 2. National; as Africus, Hispanus, Macedo, Mauricus, Sardus: 3. Names of quality or circumstance, as Genialis, Præsens, Restitutus, Robustus, Pudens, Rusticus, Tacitus, Tiro, Tranquillus. Statius, according to Funccius, *de Ling. Lat.* v. 197., is a servile name, "a stando." I have before remarked how many of the sophists at Athens and elsewhere claimed connexion with noble Roman families. They were freedmen and clients of Roman houses.

no new discoveries in material cultivation. The idea of civilization common to the Greeks and Romans was the highest development of the bodily faculties, together with the imagination; but in exploring the agencies of the natural world, and turning its forces to the use of man, their progress soon reached its limits. The Greeks and Romans were almost equally unsteady in tracing the laws of physical phenomena, which they empirically observed, and analysing the elements of the world around them. Their advance in applied science stopped short with the principles of mechanics, in which they doubtless attained great practical proficiency. Roman engineering, especially, deserves the admiration even of our own times. But the ancients invented no instruments for advancing the science of astronomy; they remained profoundly ignorant of the mysteries of chemistry; their medicine, notwithstanding the careful diagnosis of Hippocrates and Galen, could not free itself from connexion with the most trivial superstitions. The Greeks speculated deeply in ethics and politics; the Romans were intelligent students of legal theory and procedure; but neither could discover from these elementary sciences the compound ideas of public economy. Their principles of commerce and finance were to the last rude and unphilosophical. They made little advance, at the height of their prosperity and knowledge, in the economy of labour and production; they made no provision for the support of the increasing numbers to which the human race, under the operation of natural laws, ought to have attained. We read of no improvements in the common processes of agriculture, none even in the familiar mode of grinding corn, none in the extraction and smelting of ores, none in the art of navigation. Even in war, to which they so ardently devoted themselves, we find the helmet and cuirass, the sword, spear, and buckler, iden-

Limits of material improvement in ancient civilization.

tical in character and almost in form, from the siege of Troy to the sack of Rome. Changes in tactics and discipline were slight and casual, compelled rather by some change in circumstances than spontaneous or scientific. The ancient world had, in short, no versatility, no power of adaptation to meet the varying wants of its outward condition. Its ideas were not equal to the extension of its material dominion. A little soul was lodged in a vast body.

The decline of Roman civilization dates from before the fall of the Republic.

The Egyptian civilization, the Hindoo, the Chinese, as well as the Greek and Roman, have all had their natural limits, at which their vitality was necessarily arrested. Possibly all civilizations are subject to a similar law, though some may have a wider scope and a more enduring force than others; or possibly there may be a real salt of society in the principle of intelligent freedom, which has first learnt to control itself, that it may deserve to escape from the control of external forces. But Roman society, at least, was animated by no such principle. At no period within the sphere of historic records was the commonwealth of Rome anything but an oligarchy of warriors and slave-owners, who indemnified themselves for the restraint imposed on them by their equals in the forum by aggression abroad and tyranny in their households. The causes of its decline seem to have little connexion with the form of government established in the first and second centuries. They were in full operation before the fall of the Republic, though their baneful effects were disguised and perhaps retarded by outward successes, by extended conquests, and increasing supplies of tribute or plunder. The general decline of population throughout the ancient world may be dated even from the second century before our era. The last age of the Republic was perhaps the period of the most rapid exhaustion of the human race; but its dissolution was arrested under Augustus, when the population

recovered for a time in some quarters of the empire, and remained at least stationary in others. The curse of slavery could not but make itself felt again, and demanded the destined catastrophe. Whatever evil we ascribe to the despotism of the Cæsars, we must remark that it was Slavery that rendered political freedom and constitutional government impossible. Slavery fostered in Rome, as previously at Athens, the spirit of selfishness and sensuality, of lawlessness and insolence, which cannot consist with political equality, with political justice, with political moderation. The tyranny of the emperors was, as I have elsewhere observed, only the tyranny of every noble extended and intensified. The empire became no more than an ergastulum or barracoon on a vast scale, commensurate with the dominions of the greatest of Roman slaveholders. It is vain to imagine that a people can be tyrants in private life, and long escape subjection to a common tyrant in public. It was more than they could expect, more, indeed, than they deserved, if they found in Augustus, at least, and Vespasian, in Trajan and Hadrian, in Antoninus and Aurelius, masters who sought spontaneously to divest themselves of the most terrible attributes of their boundless autocracy.

The effect of pestilence and other natural disturbances now permanently disastrous.

We have noticed already the pestilence which befell Italy and many of the provinces in the reign of Aurelius. There is reason to believe that this scourge was no common disorder, that it was of a type new at least in the West, and that, as a new morbific agent, its ravages were more lasting, as well as more severe, than those of an ordinary sickness. This plague, for it seems to merit the specific name, was observed by the great physician Galen, to whom it appeared as a new and startling phenomenon.[1] He has given some

[1] I have not seen Prof. Hecker's *Commentatio de Peste Antoniniana*, 1835, in which the little that is known of this plague is said to be collected and examined. Zumpt refers to the description of the

account of its symptoms, and, though its course and action are little known to us, there seems ground for believing that it formed an era in ancient medicine. At another time, when the stamina of ancient life were healthier and stronger, such a visitation might possibly have come and gone, and, however fatal at the moment, have left no lasting traces; but periods seem to occur in national existence when there is no constitutional power of rallying under casual disorders.[1] The sickness which in the youth of the commonwealth would have dispelled its morbid humours and fortified its system, may have proved fatal to its advancing years, and precipitated a hale old age into palsied decrepitude. The vital powers of the empire possessed no elasticity; every blow now told upon it with increasing force; the blows it slowly or impatiently returned were given by the hands of hired barbarians, not by the strength of its own right arm. Not sickness alone, but famines, earthquakes, and conflagrations, fell in rapid succession upon the capital and the provinces.[2] Such casualties may have occurred at other periods not

symptoms by Galen: "Pustules appeared on the body, accompanied with inward heat and putrid breath, with hoarseness and cough. If the impostumes broke there was a chance for the patient's life, but if not, he was certain to die. Diarrhœa set in, and was the surest token of death." *Bevölkerung in Alterthum.* p. 85. note.

[1] Niebuhr has expressed the opinion that "the ancient world never recovered from the blow inflicted upon it by the plague which visited it in the reign of M. Aurelius." (*Lectures on Roman Hist.* ii. 282.) His comparison of its effects to those of the great plague at Athens may be fanciful, to those of the Black Death of the middle ages more fanciful still. The apparent degeneracy of English society after the plague of London might have served him for another illustration. But society soon recovers from such calamities, if its constitution is sound. It is in the decay of nations that such blows form real historical epochs.

[2] Zumpt, *Stand der Bevölkerung*, p. 84., gives a long list of earthquakes, famines, and pestilences, from Augustus downwards. The plague of Aurelius had a second outbreak under Commodus (Dion, lxxii. 14.), in which 2,000 died in Rome daily. Another pestilence, more general and more terrible, is recorded about 260. See particularly Zosimus, i. 26., and Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* vii. 21.

less frequently or disastrously; but these were observed, while the others passed unnoticed, because the courage of the nation was now broken no less than its physical vigour, and distressed and terrified, it beheld in every natural disorder the stroke of fate, the token of its destined dissolution.

Desperate expedients for resisting the attack of the barbarians.

Nor indeed was the alarm unfounded. These transient faintings and sicknesses were too truly the symptoms of approaching collapse. The long line of the northern frontier, from Odessus to the Island of the Batavi, was skirted by a fringe of fire, and through the lurid glare loomed the wrathful faces of myriads, Germans, Scythians, and Sarmatians, all armed for the onslaught in sympathy or concert. To buy off the attack with bribes and blackmail; to deaden the shock by introducing other barbarians within the borders, on whom the first blow might fall, and possibly be repelled; to recruit the stricken remnant of the legions with strangers, slaves, and the refuse of the streets; such were the resources of the coward, the crafty, or the desperate; but little trust was placed, perhaps, in any of them. The people were smitten with an access of superstitious devotion; they breathed fresh warmth into their ancient ceremonies, and fanned to brighter flame their slumbering altar-fires; they sought again the long derided oracles, and revolved prophetic scrolls with trembling eagerness; they raised new shrines to every deity whose power might temper for their preservation the air and the water, the sunshine or the moonshine.[1] They sacrificed many

Revival of superstitious observances.

[1] The moral effect of these visitations in the middle of the third century is marked by the revived worship of all the deities supposed to have salutary influence in such cases, as of Apollo, Juno, Diana, Mars, Mercury, Liber, Neptune, Vulcan, Hercules, and Æsculapius. This may be traced on medals from the emperor Gallus.. Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.* vii. 357. foll.; Zumpt, p. 86. The worship of Æsculapius appears to have spread at this period, particularly in Asia

hecatombs; but the blood of bulls and lambs no longer reassured the fainting heart of the worshippers; under the Republic Gauls and Greeks had been buried alive in the comitium in moments of public calamity; and in the age of Aurelius victims were sought among members, not of a foreign nation, but of a hostile faith. The first persecution of the Christians under Nero I have ascribed to popular indignation at the unruly temper of the Jews, with whom they were at first confounded, and by whom they were discovered and denounced. The procedure, once established against them in the capital on a special occasion, was extended abroad by zealous officials, and inflamed by the stubborn and mutinous spirit which seemed alone to animate them. Trajan treated Christianity as a breach of state discipline; but Hadrian, less of a martinet and more of a speculative thinker, controlled in part the assiduity of the proconsular courts-martial. Antoninus, at peace with himself and with all the world, entertained no jealousy or anger towards these harmless sectaries, and was willing to allay the exasperation which the troubles of the provinces engendered against them. But Aurelius regarded the crime of Christianity, the crime of refusing to worship the gods, not as an outbreak of turbulence and disobedience, but as an insult to the majesty of the national divinities, and the preeminence of the national cult. As a philosopher he cherished himself no faith in the deities of the Capitol[1],

Persecution of the Christians.

Minor. It is frequently noticed by Aristides, Celsus, and Apuleius. Justin Martyr remarks that the miracles of Jesus Christ were compared to the wonderful works of the God of healing. (*Apol.* i. 34.) The era is also marked by the appearance of pretenders to miraculous healing powers; new and mysterious remedies came into repute; experiments were made on the nervous system like those we call mesmeric, all calculated to enhance the idea of a divine interference in the healing of diseases. See Greswell, p. 314., whose explanation of these circumstances, as mere rivalry with the Christian miracles, seems to me inadequate.

[1] See, for instance, M. Aurel. *Comment.* v. 8.: *ὁποῖόν ἐστι τὸ λεγό-*

but, as emperor, he paid not the less respect to the fabled objects of vulgar adoration; nor could he excuse the horror with which the Christians shrank from joining formally in a service which the chief of the state deemed innocent and decorous.[1] These august shadows had nerved the arms of a line of heroes; these potent names had swayed the imperator in the field and the consul in the senate-house. They existed at least in the realities they had effected, in the deeds they had produced, in the resolutions they had inspired. Under their influence the empire had waxed and flourished; the actual crisis of her fortunes was not the moment to test their value by a wanton defiance. The firmness of the Christians seemed to Aurelius strange and unnatural. He scanned it as a marvel before he resented it as a crime.[2] In another generation the emperors will cease to reason or reflect on the phenomenon at all. The increasing disasters of the state will seem to them, as they seemed already to the multitude, a proof of the anger of the gods against the most formidable enemies of Olympus.[3]

The extent to which this persecution was carried under Aurelius is shown by records fully entitled to our reliance, whence we learn that many professors of the faith, of every condition and of either sex,

μενον ὅτι συνέταξεν ὁ Ἀσκλήπιος τούτῳ ἱππασίαν, ἢ ψυχρολουσίαν, ἢ ἀνυποδησίαν· τοιοῦτόν ἐστι καὶ τὸ, συνέταξεν τούτῳ ἡ τῶν ὅλων φύσις νόσον, ἢ πήρωσιν, ἢ ἀποβολήν.

[1] Thus Seneca, as quoted by Augustin, *de Civitate Dei*, vi. 10.: "Meminerimus cultum ejus magis ad morem quam ad rem pertinere."

[2] M. Aurel. *Comment.* xi. 3.: *μὴ κατὰ ψιλὴν παράταξιν, ὡς οἱ Χριστιανοί.*

[3] During the ages of persecution the Christian apologists very naturally set themselves to show that the calamities of the empire were such as had occurred before, and could not be ascribed to the new religion. So Arnobius, *Adv. Gentes*, i. 4.: "Quando est humanum genus aquarum diluviis interemptum? non ante nos? quando mundus incensus in favillas et cineres dissolutus est? non ante nos? quando urbes amplissimæ marinis copertæ sunt fluctibus? non ante nos? quando cum feris bella, et prælia cum leonibus gesta sunt? non ante nos?"

were put cruelly to death both in the East and West. Of these victims Melito, bishop of Sardis, and Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, were the most distinguished; but the martyrdom of Pothinus, Ponticus and Blandina, at Lyons, has been commemorated by the Church with no less affectionate devotion.[1] The rescripts of Trajan and Hadrian, which forbade the Christians to be sought out, and menaced their accusers with punishment, were abrogated or at least tacitly disregarded by terrified fanatics. The activity, indeed, of the persecution seems to have relaxed towards the close of this reign; but this was owing rather to the emperor's apparent successes, and to the reviving confidence of his subjects, than to the remorse or compassion of either.[2]

Martyrdoms of Melito, Polycarp, Pothinus, and Blandina.

Of the feelings and character of the imperial philosopher a deeply-interesting portraiture is left us in the memorials of his private Meditations. Amidst the toils and terrors of the Marcomannic war, in the camp or the military station, on the banks of the Danube or the slopes of the Carpathians, Aurelius snatched a few hours from his labours to question his conscience on the discharge of his duties, to confirm himself in the precepts of philosophy, to fortify his soul against the troubles of the world, and the dread of death.[3]

The "Meditations" or "Commentaries" of M. Aurelius.

[1] Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* v. 1–5.; Sulp. Sever. ii. 46.; St. Jerome, *Catal. Script.* c. 35.; Ruinart, *Acta Martyrum sincera.*

[2] That such was the early Christian tradition appears from Tertullian's statement, that Aurelius checked the persecution of the Christians after the success of their prayers against the Quadi, and from a letter ascribed to him also favourable to them, which is appended to the Apology of Justin. We may fairly credit the tradition, while we question the authenticity of the facts on which it pretends to rest.

[3] It was with a bitter sigh, no doubt, that Aurelius constrained himself to believe and affirm that no state of life is so favourable for philosophy as empire. *Comment.* xi. 7.: πῶς ἐναργὲς προσπίπτει τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἄλλην βίου ὑπόθεσιν εἰς τὸ φιλοσοφεῖν οὕτως ἐπιτήδειον, ὡς ταύτην ἐν ᾗ νῦν ὢν τυγχάνεις.

The records of this self-examination extend to twelve books, each containing numerous remarks or maxims, generally unconnected, involving manifold repetitions, and presenting thoughts of very different value; but all tending to establish the broad principles of the Stoic philosophy, as then taught and understood. Aurelius had imbibed the learning of Rusticus, of Sextus the son of Plutarch, and of Apollonius, of whom we have no special knowledge; but of the sage Epictetus, whom he most studied and admired, some remains have been collected by which his own position among the best and wisest of the ancients is established, and which disclose the true basis of the imperial philosophy. The point of interest in these works is the place they hold between the teaching of the earlier philosophers, and that of the revivalists of the third century. The time had come for a strong reaction towards positive belief. The Heathen mythology had drawn with it in its fall the principles even of natural religion. But this decline had reached its limits. In default of a better system, mythology itself might again rear its head. We have already noticed symptoms, faint and transient perhaps, of such an impending restoration. Even had the revelation of Christianity not been made, the Nemesis of unbelief would doubtless have raised some objects on the surface of the whelming waters, were they but straws, to clutch at; and the abortive efforts of Augustus and Domitian towards a ritualistic revival, show the direction in which the tide of opinion or sentiment was setting. But, already in the second century, the positive teaching of the Christians had reanimated religious speculation beyond its immediate circle, and we may trace in Epictetus and his imperial admirer the effects of a moral movement which it will not be unjust to ascribe, at least in part, to the influence of St. Paul and his Master. Both Epictetus and Aure-

Reaction in favour of positive belief.

lius recognise fully the personal existence of Deity; neither the concrete divinities of Heathen legend, on the one hand, nor any single and infinite existence on the other, but rather a multitude of abstract essences, the nature and distinctions of which are wholly beyond the scope of human definition.[1] This cordial belief in God as a moral Intelligence, is a step decidedly in advance of Seneca, and amounts, indeed, almost to a negation of the fundamental article of the older Porch, the pre-eminence of a blind and soulless Fate. There is some advance, indeed, in Aurelius beyond Epictetus; the pupil is wiser than his master, and seems to arrive at a genuine conviction of a moral Providence. Nevertheless, on one important point, both the one and the other have fallen behind Seneca. Their hold of the doctrine of a future life appears even fainter than his. Epictetus, indeed, hardly ventures to regard it at all; Aurelius, more hopeful, more loving, more ardent, seems to cherish the fond aspiration, though he dares not assert it as a dogma.[2] But for this apparent falling-off a sufficient reason may be assigned. The later Stoics had attained a clearer idea of the personality of God, with a higher conception of His greatness and purity. They could not rest in the pantheism of an earlier age; immortality, in their view, must be personal and individual, if it exist at all. But the temper of the age, as of every age of declining civilization, was deeply infected with the principles of materialism: it required faith in the specific dogma of the Christian Resurrection to allay its feverish distrust in a future state of being. In the next century, the mellow Stoicism of these

[1] Thus *Comment.* iii. 13.: *οὐ γὰρ ἀνθρώπινόν τι ἄνευ τῆς ἐπὶ τὰ θεῖα συναποφορᾶς εὖ πράξεις.* v. 7. on the duty of simple prayer to the gods. vi. 10.: *σέβω, καὶ εὐσταθῶ, καὶ θάῤῥω τῷ διοικοῦντι·* *i.e.* providence. vi. 23.: *ἐφ' ἅπασι δὴ θεοὺς ἐπικαλοῦ.* vi. 29.: *αἰδοῦ θεούς.*

[2] Comp. *Comment.* iv. 32., v. 13., vi. 15. 28., viii. 58., x. 28.

amiable enthusiasts was supplanted, in turn, by the New Platonism, which advanced from the faint apprehension of a personal deity to a grasp of his attributes and nature; which embraced a distinct belief in the emanation of the soul from him, and yearned for reunion with him. The errors of the Alexandrian School, fantastic as they were, served to prepare mankind for the reception of the Gospel. Thus it was that Philosophy and Religion at last united on the solid ground of an intelligent faith in God. On this ground was raised the structure of the Athanasian theology. The clouds and fogbanks of Plotinus and Porphyry, of Julian and Libanius, were replaced by the enduring fabric of the doctrine of the Christian Trinity.

Melancholy character of the "Meditations" or "Commentaries" of Aurelius.

Few books leave a profounder impression of melancholy than the Commentaries of the good Aurelius. With our knowledge of the circumstances under which they were compiled, the pangs of society around him, the vexations he personally suffered, and the lack of spiritual hope to which his own doctrines condemned him, it is sad rather than cheering to note the stern self-repression which forbids, throughout these private Meditations, the utterance of a single complaint, the heaving of a single sigh. One strong burst of natural feeling would be a relief to the reader, as it would have been doubtless to the writer himself. One passionate reference to the troubles of the empire, and the sufferings of the people, or to his own endurance, with its transient gleams of success and hopes of triumph, would have imparted a more general interest to reflections which now address themselves only here and there to a few abstract reasoners.[1] But no! the imperial theorist

[1] The "Commentaries" abound, however, in noble reflections on the duties of the ruler towards his people. Comp. vi. 29.: *μὴ ἀποκαισαρώθῃς, μὴ βάφῃς.* vii. 36.: *βασιλικὸν, εὖ μὲν πράττειν, κακῶς δὲ ἀκούειν.* vi. 54.: *τὸ τῷ σμήνει μὴ σύμφερον, οὐδε τῇ μελίσσῃ συμφέρει.*

will live and die a martyr to his theory. The Christians in the arena of Lugdunum suffered, perhaps, no greater torments. Nor was the temper of Aurelius naturally hard and unbending. It was, on the contrary, almost feminine in its softness. He imbibed his religious feelings from his mother, his views of morals and philosophy from his teachers; he was like wax in the hands of those he loved, and he loved all who showed love towards him, and some even who should have loved him but did not.[1] In his public career he betrayed a little weakness; in his domestic relations his infirmity was still more conspicuous. Even his Meditations, with their anxious and importunate scruples, seem to betray some want of decision, some littleness of view and purpose. We must smile at the fervour with which the wisest of princes exhorts himself to rise betimes in the morning.[2] To fix deeply in the mind the conviction of the vanity of earthly things, is a hard lesson for all: it was hard even for the slave Epictetus, harder, surely, for the emperor Aurelius. It is hard for a Christian, much harder for a Pagan; hard for those who look for substantial glories hereafter; hardest of all for such as have no hope beyond the grave; or, if they dare to cherish their yearning in secret, are forbidden by their theories to give it utterance. Nevertheless, the constant recurrence of this theme in the work before us, and the variety of argument and illustration with which it is enforced, disclose a weakness which cannot be wholly overlooked.[3] He who would exact from himself and us so high a standard of purity and self-renunciation, while he limits us so strictly to the resources of our own

[1] M. Aurel. *Comment.* i. 3.: *παρὰ τῆς μητρὸς τὸ θεοσεβές.* His special obligations to each of his teachers, Diognetus, Rusticus, Sextus of Chæronea, Apollonius, &c., are acknowledged in turn.

[2] *Comment.* v. 1.: *ὄρθρου ὅταν δυσόκνως ἐξεγείρῃ, πρόχειρον ἔστω, ὅτι ἐπὶ ἀνθρώπου ἔγείρομαι.*

[3] *Comment.* iii. 5., iv. 3. 32. 38., v. 33., vi. 13. 15. 34., x. 28.

strength and virtue, discarding all the aid of a higher power, which even the Heathen passionately demanded, should have been himself stronger, firmer, and more self-supporting.

General hopelessness of society at this era.

Yet once more, in justice to this paragon of Heathen excellence, let us remember that Aurelius represents the decrepitude of his era. He is hopeless because the age is hopeless. He cannot rise beyond the sphere of ideas around him. The Heathen world looked for no renovation of a society which was visibly perishing before its face. The idea of a constant advance of mankind towards perfection had never formed an element in its aspirations; and now, when the popular notion of its degeneration was actually realized, it accepted its apparent destiny without a murmur. Even the Christians could with difficulty surmount these desponding anticipations. To them, also, the decline of society was fully manifest; nor did they regard the diffusion of religious truth as a means of cure and restoration. They believed that the Deity would take up his abode in the soul of the earnest Christian; they were convinced of the power of attaining personally the closest union with the Spirit of God; they gloried in the assurance of a future exaltation to the mansion of their Father in heaven, through the strength which He alone could furnish, or the change which He alone could work in them. And this assurance, warmly embraced, might render them cheerful and even triumphant amidst the public calamities, and in their own pains and martyrdoms. But they expected no general revival of society through the purer morality of the Gospel; no fructifying of the blessed seed in the bosom of an effete civilization. For such a progress and result no time, as they anticipated, would be allowed, for the end of the world appeared to be at hand; the outward frame of law and order was only upheld, in

their view, by the continued existence of the empire; stricken and shaken as that framework was, it could not long endure, and on its fall would follow the dissolution of the divine creation, the conflagration of the universe, the end of all things. To Justin and Tertullian, to Origen and Arnobius, a revelation of the impending establishment of Christianity would have seemed as strange and incredible as to Aurelius himself.

Conclusion.

In my first chapter I indicated this momentous revolution as the period to which I purposed to conduct my history of the Romans under the Empire. I had hoped to entwine with my relation of events, and my review of literature and manners, an account of the change of opinion by which a positive belief in religious dogmas was evolved from the chaos of doubt, or rose upon the ruins of baffled incredulity; to trace the progress of this moral transformation from the day when the High Priest of Jupiter, the head of the Roman hierarchy, the chief interpreter of divine things to the Pagan conscience, declared before the assembled senators that Immortality was a dream, and future Retribution a fable, to that when the Emperor, the Chief of the State, the head of the newly established Church of the Christians, presided over a general council of bishops, and affirmed at its bidding the transcendent mystery of a Triune Deity. But I have learnt by a trial of many years to distrust my qualifications for so grave a task. And other cares impede me, other duties warn me to desist. I have now reached the point at which the narrative of my great predecessor Gibbon commences, and much as I regret that the crisis should be unfolded to the English reader by one who, unhappy in his school and in his masters, in his moral views and spiritual training, approached it, with all his mighty powers, under

a cloud of ignoble prejudices, I forbear myself from entering the lists in which he has long stalked alone and unchallenged. The work I now offer as completed, embraces what may be loosely designated the constitutional period of the Roman monarchy, extending from the graceful primacy of Pompeius to the barbarian despotism of the son of Aurelius. That it should be permanently accepted as the English History of the Upper Empire is more than I venture to anticipate; but I shall not regret its being in due season supplanted, if I lead a successor of firmer grasp and wider vision to sift our records in a critical and independent spirit.

INDEX.

THE END.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY SPOTTISWOODE AND CO.
NEW-STREET SQUARE